

# Remembering the Rising: Irish newspaper coverage of the 1966 and 2016 anniversaries of the 1916 Easter Rising

By

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Declaration: I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of the MA in Journalism & Media Communications, is my own; based on my personal study and/or research, and that I have acknowledged all material and sources used in its preparation. I also certify that I have not copied in part or whole or otherwise plagiarised the work of anyone else, including other students.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

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# 1. Introduction

*'People will say hard things of us now,  
but we shall be remembered in posterity  
and blessed by unborn generations.'*

- P. H. Pearse

As he walked towards the Stonebreakers' Yard in Kilmainham Gaol on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1916, Patrick Pearse, the figurehead of the 1916 Easter Rising, was clear in his views that future generations would eventually look kindly upon the men and women who had struck at the heart of an Empire.

Over the past century, those 'unborn generations' have been debating whether Pearse's actions - and those of the men and women who fought alongside him that faithful week in April 1916 – were justifiable.

Remembrance of historical events are a 'collision between that which is fixed and that which is fluid'. (Higgins, 2016:7). In other words, there are a myriad of different way in which historical events can be viewed and -most salient to this study – be reported on. Fierce and heated debate about the legitimacy of the Easter Rising have raged for more than a century. This study examines this fierce debate through the prism of the Irish print press at the occasion of two of its most anticipated anniversaries, the 50th anniversary in 1966 and the centenary in 2016. The study will attempt to compare these two commemorative chapters to ascertain whether the 'unborn generations' in 1966 viewed Pearse and his acolytes any differently than those fifty years later in 2016.

Through the following questions, the study will endeavour to ascertain what was the media's view of the 1916 Easter Rising a hundred years on from the event. The study will then look at historic articles from 1966 to show evolution of thought towards this seminal moment in Ireland's. The questions are as follows:

- How did the Irish print media cover the anniversaries of the Easter Rising in 1966 and 2016?
- What were the difference in coverage between 1966 and 2016 (if any)?

- Has there been a change of perception of the Easter Rising in the print media since the fiftieth anniversary in 1966?

The study will be divided into chapters. This first chapter will be a literature review which reviews the literature relevant to the subject matter – the Easter Rising. It will outline how historians, journalists and commentators alike have viewed the events of 1916 through the past one hundred years – with particular focus upon two salient anniversaries, i.e. in 1966 and 2016.

Following this chapter, the methodology chapter will outline by what means the research questions will be answered by relying on how similar studies have been carried out in the past. Then, using these methods, the research findings will be presented before they will be discussed and concluded by the researcher.



## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

In 1969, the Irish historian, Owen Dudley Edwards declared: 'If history is, in the words of E.H Carr, "and unending dialogue between the present and the past", it has for long been in Ireland a dialogue in which the present had been reduced to making simple affirmative statements, in support of the past's assertions.' (Dudley Edwards, 1969:22)

This chapter examines these assertions and looks at how the 1916 Rising has been viewed over the past century by academics and interested media professionals. It is, however, first necessary to examine the importance of history and the commemoration of significant historical events in the context of this study.

Regan, 2013, Horne & Madigan, 2013 and Burke, 1997 all discuss the importance of the phenomenon known as 'historical revisionism'. They are all conscious that is not without pitfalls.

Revisionism 'is a set of "new" explanations of Irish politics and history', which 'itself is not a completely unitary, homogenous theory or project with rigid boundaries and strict lines of demarcation' (Burke, 1997:2).

It has been said that without 'strict lines of demarcation', historical events 'assume an unreal, almost fictional form' (Kostick and Collins, 2000). In other words, real historical events can quickly pass into mythology and mutate into nothing more than tales and if they are not widely agreed upon.

To speculate now on how those involved in the Easter Rising viewed the verdict of historicity might be considered foolish. Historians tend to steer clear of speaking for the dead. They 'rightly cringe at questions like "What would the men of 1916 think of us now?"' But reflections on the meaning of the past for communal visions of the future 'do not have to be so crude, especially since events have conspired to put back into play so many of the things that seemed largely settled, as a result of the fateful decade of conflict' (O'Toole, 2013:160-161).

Having said this, however, historians are of course constantly open to reviewing and reinterpreting past events. 'Revising the past in the light of new evidence, methods, and interpretations is what most professional historians do' as Regan (2013) put it. 'In Ireland, a distinction has sometimes been made between this "historical revisionism", aspiring to scholarly objectivity, and an alleged ideologically led 'anti-national' or capital R "Revisionism."' Regan (2013:5) elaborates further by stating: 'This is likely a false distinction. Historical research, as Ernest Renan long ago observed, will necessarily rub against the national story where the former honours the evidence and the latter serves the nation'.

The national story of Ireland since her independence was described by Conor Cruise O'Brien in the *Irish Times* in 1966 on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Easter Rising thus: 'My generation grew into the chilling knowledge that we had failed, that our history had turned into rubbish, our past to "a trouble of fools". With this feeling, it is not surprising that the constant public praise for the ideals of Pearce and Connolly should have produced in us bafflement rather than enthusiasm. We were bred to be patriotic, only to find that there was nothing to be patriotic about; we were republicans of a republic that wasn't there. Small wonder that Pearce's vision of an Ireland "not merely free but Gaelic as well" did not convince us'. (O'Brien, 1966:7)

A more recent tendency for historians have tended to focus on the violence and actions of Irish republicans rather than the actions of the British establishment, especially in the decades since the outbreak of Northern Ireland's 'Troubles' in 1968-69:

Academic historians have tended to analyse republican violence in forensic detail, while devoting less attention to that perpetrated by the Crown forces. This is partly due to the greater availability of sources for republican violence, but it also reflects the broader political and historiographical context in which the scholarly analysis of revolutionary violence has emerged since the 1970s (McGarry, 2012:53)

Therefore, commemorating the past in Ireland is particularly complex, especially given that the nation is less than a century old.

## **2.2 Commemoration**

‘Commemorations are part of the process of stabilizing historical events that represent moments of rupture. They take an event which may have been violent or catastrophic and ritualize it into a force for social cohesion.’ (Higgins, 2016:14)

Commemoration ‘should help us to understand what forces impelled people to commit terrible as well as courageous acts. Though the outcome of such investigations is often contentious and morally unsettling, it is preferable to a bland recitation of general blamelessness’ (Fitzgerald:127)

It is therefore a process that will attract contentious and often fraught debate: ‘Commemoration must tread softly because it treads on torn flesh and sunken bones’ stated (O’Toole, 2013:159), therefore, like most commemorations, ‘that of the Easter Rising has always been, to some degree, a collision between that which is fixed and that which is fluid’. (Higgins, 2016:7)

Declan Kiberd stated in *The Elephant of Revolutionary Forgetfulness* that in Ireland ‘conservative nationalist parties had encouraged the people to become drunk on remembrance’ (Kiberd, 1991:5).

## **2.3 The 1916 Easter Rising and the aftermath**

‘All rebellion is infectious, and that is why Lenin praised the Easter Rising in Dublin.’ (O’Brien, 1966:3)

The above statement rings true when one considers the amount that has been written over the last one hundred years on the subject of the Easter Rising, an event that shaped the course of Irish history.

Some see the events of Easter week 1916 as unnecessary. UCD’s Michael Laffan, speaking on Newstalk’s *Taking History*, made his views very clear: ‘In our case there would have been no question – I believe- Ireland achieving full independence peacefully as was the case, say, like in a country like Norway.’ (Laffan, 2015). Columnist, Kevin Myers is of the same view, calling the Easter Rising an ‘unmitigated evil for Ireland’ with a legacy of ‘violence and murder, clandestine covens which haunt us to this day.’ (Myers, 2000:35)

However, others believe that it was necessary. In 2016, asked by former Conservative MP, Michael Portello in RTE’s *The Enemy Files* whether Ireland would have broken away from Britain peacefully, Robert Fisk, Middle East correspondent for *The Independent*, simply replied: “No. The British would not have let Ireland go”. (Fisk, 2016)

It could be in retrospect, as Roisin Higgins stated, that ‘the true significance of the Easter Rising would only be understood’. And, indeed, ‘its complex meaning in Irish society owed as much to how it was commemorated as to the original event’. (Higgins, 2016:1)

Regan (2013) and Dudley Edwards (1968) both discuss how a historical event passed very quickly into mythology and into the Irish psyche. The former stated:

The Rising became enmeshed in ideas of sacrifice and martyrdom, and was entwined with the imagery of Christ’s death and resurrection. The rising was adopted as the independent state’s founding moment, and around its leaders, particularly the poet, educationalist and playwright, Patrick Pearse, there emerged an enduring hero-cult (Regan, 2013:3)

The latter, Owen Dudley Edwards said that ‘the cult of the martyrs flourished’ and goes on to say that:

It drew strength from the purity of the motives of the dead leaders- and from the shocking murder of Sheehy-Skeffington. Mr Donal McCartney shows how dedicated some of the rebels were to Gaelic Revivalism which gave birth to a distinctive ideology expressing itself in the personification of Ireland, in the fostering of the Cuchulainn cult and the blood-sacrifice doctrine.” (Dudley Edwards, 1968: 271)

Because of this transfer from the historical to the mythological, the Rising ‘has been most effectively remembered through metaphorical representations and these have proved themselves to be very resilient.’ (Higgins, 2016:10)

These metaphorical representations were disseminated largely thanks the Roman Catholic Church whose teachings had a great influence on the leaders of 1916 as well as the leaders of the newly established Irish Free State:

To a significant extent, the modern Irish state is the product of that ideology [Catholicism], not only in general but specifically of the form inculcated by the Christian Brothers. Patrick Pearse and six others out of the fifteen men executed immediately after the Easter Rising of 1916 were past pupils of the Brothers, as were many of the rank and file, in that Rising and in the hostilities of 1919-1921. The two leaders who dominated the first thirty years of the new state – WT Cosgrave and Eamon deValera-had been pupils of the brothers (O’Brien, 1995:10)

McGarry (2012:41) states that by the 1950s when the state had firmly been established, any critical perspectives of Easter Week 1916 'had been replaced by a no less partisan nationalist historiography (much of it written by veterans of the Rising), which emphasized the piety, chivalry and self-sacrifice of the rebels.' The focus was more on the 'British atrocities' while sanitizing the rebels' actions.'

## **2.4 1966 - 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary**

As the 1960s dawned and Ireland ever increasingly 'took her place among the nations of the world', professional historians began to seriously tackle the Rising (McGarry, 2012).

Desmond Greaves, writing in *Marxism Today* in April 1966 was of the view that the commemoration was a charade: 'Philistine professors who never expressed a republican sentiment in their lives, are producing learned papers, well-documented from official sources. One would almost be led to believe that the Easter Rising was what put into power the class and government who are in power today.'

Kiberd (1991:5-6) was unimpressed with the commemorative events of 1966 as well:

Politicians and propagandists produced a sanitised heroic image of Patrick Pearse, at least partly to downplay the socialism of Connolly, then attracting the allegiance of the liberal young... [The celebrations in 1966] were over the top purgation of a debt to the past, which most of the celebrants secretly suspected would go unpaid.

Others were more upbeat about the fiftieth anniversary. Higgins (2007) characterised the jubilee of the Rising as 'the most elaborate commemoration of the Easter Rising in the state's history' and was an 'opportunity to celebrate the legitimacy of the state and to assert the good character of its citizens'. However, instead of conveying the complexity of the event, the Irish political and diplomatic elite 'found it easier to present the Rising as a moment of clarity (or modernity) that had ushered in a new era in Irish history.' (Higgins, 2007:34)

When it came to how these celebrations were covered by the Irish media, Higgins (2007:33) stated: 'The journalistic endorsements were certainly not overwhelming, but they did suggest some success for the government's attempt to showcase the achievements of the independent state'.

Section 2.8 in this chapter will explore in more detail how the major Irish newspapers of the day covered the jubilee.

The national anniversary celebrations of 1966 'invited reappraisals of the original hopes of the revolutionaries: what had the struggle been *for* and what in fact had come to pass?' (O'Brien, 1966:99), while also implicitly supporting 'the view that the independent state and its government were an extension of the revolutionary project.' (Higgins, 2016:1)

Conor Cruise O'Brien viewed event of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as 'funeral ceremonies of the Republic proclaimed fifty years ago'. He stated in the vitriolic *Embers of Easter 1916-1966* - which was later described by Kiberd (1991) as 'the most perceptive commentary' of the year- that 'the national objective of Pearce and Connolly is now finally, and necessarily, buried. The cultural objective of Pearce, a fully bilingual Ireland, is being tacitly abandoned'. (O'Brien, 1966:10)

There was an air of anti-climax in academic circles in and around the time of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Regan (2013:4) noticed that the state was somehow trying to cling to an idealism previously associated with the Easter Rising:

To 1970, the state's official nationalism had been sustained by a declining revolutionary elite clinging to their prestige and power. Critics said in the 1960s that the revolutionaries had failed to deliver on their youthful idealism, with their promise of reunification, Gaelicisation, and cultural and economic prosperity.

At this time, Conor Cruise O'Brien did concede that Ireland had become a relatively prosperous nation – compared to the state of the country in 1916- but that this fact should not have come as any great surprise:

Ireland has progressed, it is true, both economically and socially since 1916; in fifty years, it would be odd and depressing if it had not. Increased prosperity has been due primarily to improved living standards in Europe generally and secondarily, in recent years, to the rise of a sort of meritocracy, of able administrators both in the State services and in public and private concerns. (O'Brien, 1969:11)

Due to this increased prosperity, the 50th anniversary was used by the government of the day to legitimize the Irish state and to promote it in a commercial sense: 'In 1966 the official commemoration was deployed to lend legitimacy to the economic policy of modernisation and to celebrate the successes of the independent state. In contrast to the Rising itself, its fiftieth anniversary, viewed as a success as it unfolded, was reread in increasingly critical terms in the light of subsequent events' (Higgins, 2016:15). The burgeoning state broadcaster *Telefís Éireann* also lent legitimacy to the ideals of 1916 in accordance with the government of the day. (O'Brien, 1995:149)

The fiftieth anniversary was therefore a moment for the government of the day to show off Ireland and its economy on the world stage. There was also hope for improved North-South relations as by the mid-1960s 'there was a brief but remarkable thaw in relations between unionists and nationalists, Protestants and Catholics, in the island of Ireland' (O'Brien, 1995:148). This was in part due to Sean Lemass's visit to Belfast in 1965 – the first such visit to Northern Ireland by a Taoiseach (O'Brien, 1995).

However, there were still contentious issues -such as the flying of the tricolour in Northern Ireland – that had to be handled with care by the state north of the Border. 1966 was described by then Northern Ireland First Minister, Terence O'Neill as 'not a very easy year' and expressed his 'frustration at Catholics in Belfast who had "insisted on celebrating the Dublin rebellion"' and recorded, 'It was 1966 which made 1968 inevitable and was bound to put the whole future of Northern Ireland in the melting pot.' (Higgins, 2016:16)

Celebrating the 'Dublin rebellion', as O'Neill called it, using symbols such as the tricolour would, therefore, be influential: 'The commemoration in Belfast in 1966 showed just how effective a flag could be in signalling opposition to the power of the [Northern Irish] state' (Higgins, 2016:13). Flying a flag that was considered objectionable by Unionists in Northern Ireland in 1966 has been blamed in part, by some for subsequent events within a decade. (Myers, 2007)

Those events, the 'Troubles' are often traced back to the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Easter Rising (Myers, 2007). This has, though, been the subject of much debate: 'The fiftieth anniversary of the Easter Rising has been given a pivotal place in the history of the Troubles in Northern Ireland. The future Ulster Unionist leader David Trimble credited it with starting "the destabilisation of Ulster"'. However, Higgins (2016:15) goes on to state that 'Instability did not begin or end with nationalist plans to commemorate the Easter Rising.'

This view is somewhat contradicted by O'Brien (1995:149) who, by then had somewhat altered his disparaging views of the men and women of 1916, and asked:

So what went wrong? The first thing that went wrong – and the main thing in my opinion- was that the year following the Lemass-O'Neill meeting happened to be the fiftieth anniversary of the Rising of 1916. 1966 was a great commemorative year. Ghosts walked, and those ghosts cried out against peace with unionists.

The 1966 commemorative year proved, therefore, to be 'subversive to the Lemass-O'Neill enterprise' of *rapprochement* between the two states on the island of Ireland. (O'Brien, 1995:149)

Whether or not the fiftieth anniversary celebrations of the Easter Rising directly, or indirectly, led to the subsequent campaign by the IRA has been the subject of much robust debate (Higgins, 2007; Higgins 2016; O'Brien, 1966; O'Brien, 1995; Myers, 2007).

However, Heartfield & Rooney (2015: 37) see the link as spurious: 'It was not the official government commemoration of 1966 that gave the IRA the platform, but the [Irish] government ban on the commemoration in 1976.'

## **2.5 Post 1966 and the 'Troubles'**

Whatever about the causal link between the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the start of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, there was a clear shift in direction in how the Easter Rising was viewed and commemorated:

After 1969, what the Republic preferred were creation narratives moulded to its specific requirements. The treatyites' interpretations of 1922 offered both the state, and its historians, conceptualizations that appeared to reconcile the contradictory claims to both revolutionary and constitutional inheritances. At least for a southern audience narratives that were confined to the south also served to emphasise the achievements of southern nationalism in the material reality of the state and not least in its enduring stability. Easter 1916 and subsequent unmandated republican violence could not be conjured from existence and the Provisionals' commemoration in 1976 confirmed the folly of abandoning the state's alternative history to its enemies (Regan, 2013:76)

There was a conscious effort to distance the action of the men and women of 1916 from the actions of the Provisional IRA during this period. Associating these two groups was regarded as a dangerous proposition:

The proximity of the jubilee of the Rising to the outbreak of Troubles compounded the sense that commemorations of 1916 were potentially dangerous events. Between 1972 and 2006 military parade in Dublin, which had been central to commemorations of the Rising, was suspended and until the ninetieth anniversary the Irish government staged low-key official ceremonies" (Higgins, 2016:16).

There were obvious challenges for historians 'in addressing such issues as the legitimacy of the Rising's elitist violence given the Provisional IRA'S appropriation of this tradition to legitimate its own struggle' (McGarry, 2012:42)



What Conor Cruise O'Brien came to term the 'cult' of 1916 had somewhat 'wilted' and could no longer be 'be viewed through the conformable haze of idealised retrospect', as the situation in Northern Ireland quickly deteriorated from 1971 onward (O'Brien, 1995:171).

This rebuttal of the ideals of the 1916 Easter Rising was criticised by many, including the poet Michael McLaughlin who saw this suppression of commemoration of the Rising as nothing more than a political opportunism:

By 1976, and the 60<sup>th</sup> celebrations, a different tune was being played. For people of my generation, who were and who are, in an important sense, neither Republican nor non-Republican, this was a lesson they would never forget. To see history so swiftly rewritten was to realise that what was called history was in fact a façade behind which politicians manoeuvred for power (McLaughlin, 1996).

This shift – or rewriting of history- was also by deplored by Heartfield and Rooney (2015:10-11):

Between the anniversaries of 1966 and 1991 people's idea of the Rising had changed. Heroic sacrifice it seemed on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, but 25 years later a lot of people were saying that it was the act of political extremists – even Fascists – that put the gun into Irish politics, at a terrible cost in human lives over the decades.

Kiberd (1991:9) noticed that any republican voice that was sympathetic to the ideals of 1916 was invariably bound to the actions of IRA: 'As time went on, it become harder for nationalists to get a fair hearing without leaving themselves open to a charge of being fellow-travellers of the Provisional IRA.'

During this period, Conor Cruise O'Brien, who had somewhat revised his views that he had expressed in the *Embers of Easter* but was no less critical of the Rising, wrote in the *Irish Times* in 1979 that Ireland was a 'firmly established republic - about the only state which came into existence during this century of which that can be said', but that the origins of this democracy were traced in 'an utterly undemocratic episode of violence - the rising of Easter week, 1916- organised and carried out by a minority of brave fanatical men.'

Many historians are ambivalent when it comes to directly linking the violence of Easter week 1916 to the 'Troubles' that seemed to have been inspired by that faithful week. McGarry (2012:55) states that context is not to be forgotten:

The violence of 1916 must be understood within the Context of the idealization of military values during the Great War, as well as the specific circumstances in which it occurred during

Easter week. It should not be framed through the perspective of the violence that followed, even if it played a vital role in legitimizing that violence.

## **2.6 1991-75<sup>th</sup> anniversary**

At the advent of the 1990s and with tensions in Northern Ireland beginning to ease, the Easter Rising was once again -albeit tentatively- being commemorated but the official commemoration was a 'muted affair' (O'Brien, 1995:171). The then Taoiseach, Charles Haughey was even asked why he was holding a ceremony at all (Kiberd, 1991).

This was, however, a period when Ireland was looking ever increasingly beyond its own insular past and was opening up to the rest of the world. The journalist and commentator, Fintan O'Toole expressed this in an article for *The Guardian* in 7<sup>th</sup> January 1991:

1991 is not just the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Rising, it is also the year before 1992. Whatever its rights and wrongs, 1916 started something in blood and banners and glorious symbol which we are just about to end in ECUs and exchange rate mechanisms and the free flow of goods. They may not have known it but what the men and women of 1916 fought for was an Irish seat at the European Table. The Rising began with a European conflict and it may well end at long last, with a European integration.

However, the seventy-fifth anniversary was a muted affair which, as McGarry (2012) stated, 'coincided with a particularly grim spate of violence in the North'. It was clear that 'historiographical (and, to some extent, political and public) attitudes to the Rising had been significantly revised, with greater emphasis on "the conspiratorial, undemocratic, and destructive nature of the rebellion"' (McGarry, 2012:42).

The Easter Rising was also increasingly discussed in conjunction with the 1914-1918 *Great War*. Ann Rigney, discussing the memorial to the Irish who served in the First World War at Islandbridge, reflected on the recent amelioration in attitudes in commemorating not only the Easter Rising but the event that was the backdrop to the Rising: World War I. She stated:

At a point when the political conflicts that fed the divided remembrance of the First World War have hopefully given way to lasting peace, and the high profile zeal with which, in recent years, official ceremonies have sought to compensate for years of neglect has given way to annual, much less newsworthy commemorations, it may well be the architectural beauties of the garden that will ensure the long-term 'stickiness' of an increasingly dim memory of the First World War. (Rigney, 2008:95)

As tensions began to ease north of the border, there were more nuanced views of the Rising and especially of its figure head, Patrick Pearse: 'Much of the critique of Pearse in more recent times has been a necessary and overdue reaction against the plaster saint constructed in 1966' (Kiberd, 1991:6).

## **2.7 Leading up to the centenary**

As a new century dawned and as the centenary of the Easter Rising was approaching, there was an ever-increasing focus on the legacy of the Rising in Northern Ireland post the 1998 Belfast Agreement: 'the Belfast Peace Agreement of 1998 placed a premium on the understanding and accommodating of the different histories and traditions of both parts of Ireland, for the link between Irish nationalism and unionism in sharing the tragic history of the First World War' (Burke, 2013:104).

'Ironically', however, as Hanley (2013:111) stated, 'the peace process has also allowed the Irish government (at least partly for reasons of political advantage) to renew commemoration of the Easter Rising'.

Within a decade of the signing of the Belfast Agreement, another seminal commemoration was on the horizon: the ninetieth anniversary in 2006. By this point 'the pendulum had swung towards a more sympathetic interpretation of the Rising. Due to the end of the long war in the North and the economic boom in the South, it occurred within a radically different context from previous commemorations: the Irish Republic, it then appeared, was finally a success. The violence of the Rising continued to provoke controversy but public, political and historiographical attitudes had shifted in a more approving (or less critical) direction.' (McGarry, 2012:43)

However, prior to the ninetieth anniversary of the Rising in April 2006, the journalist and commentator, Kevin Myers did not go down a more 'approving' direction. He lambasted President Mary McAleese's speech which he called 'imbecilic' for her omission of any mention of a quarter century of catastrophic, 1916 inspired violence (Myers, 2007:106).

New technology seemed to also be contributing to a further thaw in relations between North and South, between republican and unionist in an increasingly globalised world. In this new age of multimedia, Paul Clark asked: "Is it not now time to examine who we really are? Thanks to modern technology-which I include my own medium, television-the world has become a smaller place, making us all neighbours. Perhaps, after all, our identity is not defined by others. (Clark, 2013:73)

Recent years has seen more inclusive commemoration, although David Fitzpatrick is sceptical:

One of the strongest and most admirable impulses behind public commemoration in contemporary Ireland, North and South, is the desire for pluralism. Who would cavil at the notion that we should commemorate victims as well as victors, unionists as well as nationalists, women as well as men, 'ordinary' folk as well as public figures? Yet it is all too easy to achieve the spurious appearance of 'inclusivity' in commemorative ceremonies, events or exhibitions by adopting simplistic and misleading dichotomies. (Fitzpatrick, 2013:127)

This pluralism advocated by some is not a thought shared by all: 'Writers, politicians and other academics tell us that this decade of centenaries should be used to promote peace and reconciliation. In other words, we have the discipline of history being manipulated to suit a contemporary political imperative. In short, history is to be bastardised when it suits, in order to underpin the politics of the peace process. This is a dangerous and foolhardy approach'. (Heartfield and Rooney, 2015:5). This 'foolhardy' approach, on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2016, was derided by McIntyre (2016:5) who said of the centenary programme that there was 'something of it for all, and all of it for nobody'.

Heartfield & Rooney (2015:145) do concede that commemorating the Easter Rising has always been an unenviable task: 'Whether it is seen as having raise republican ambitions in 1966, or having lost control to Sinn Fein in 1976, or just become a headache in 1991, the centenary of the Rising presents problems for the administration'. Higgins (2016) agrees with this evaluation, conceding that commemoration of the past has been 'exceedingly contentious' and further adds that by the ninetieth anniversary in 2006, any commemoration had simply become 'commodified'.

Heartfield and Rooney acidly observed (2015:150):

The Decade of Centenaries group aims to handle the commemoration differently. In the past Eamon DeValera owned the 50<sup>th</sup> commemoration, making it the sanctification of the state; Liam Cosgrave tried to ban the 60<sup>th</sup> Easter Commemoration only succeeding in losing control of it; Charles Haughey clamped down on the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary [by] choking it. The Decade of Centenaries has given up on trying to control the event, and chosen instead to decentre it and dilute it, by putting it alongside other events, of supposedly of equal significance.

So far, this chapter has highlighted many viewpoints on how the Easter Rising and its commemorations have been reflected generally. However, as this study examines the Irish Print Press' 'position' on the matter, it is therefore necessary to take an in depth look at each newspaper that will be examined during the course of the research.

## **2.8 Irish Newspapers**

This chapter has focused on how the Easter Rising was broadly thought of at different stages indicated by its major anniversaries. This study focuses on how leading Irish newspapers – namely the *Irish Independent*, the *Sunday Independent*, the *Irish Times* and the *Irish Press* - have viewed the events of 1916 during the 50<sup>th</sup> and 100<sup>th</sup> anniversaries.

Heartfield and Rooney (2015:1) claim that the views expressed by those such as former Taoiseach John Bruton on the Rising have had the intent of making us ‘ashamed and feel guilty’ and that it ‘gave birth to political violence and damaged the Irish psyche’. These views have found, they conclude, no ‘shortage of friends with similar assessments in the pages of Ireland’s biggest-selling paper the *Irish Independent* and in the establishment paper the *Irish Times*.”

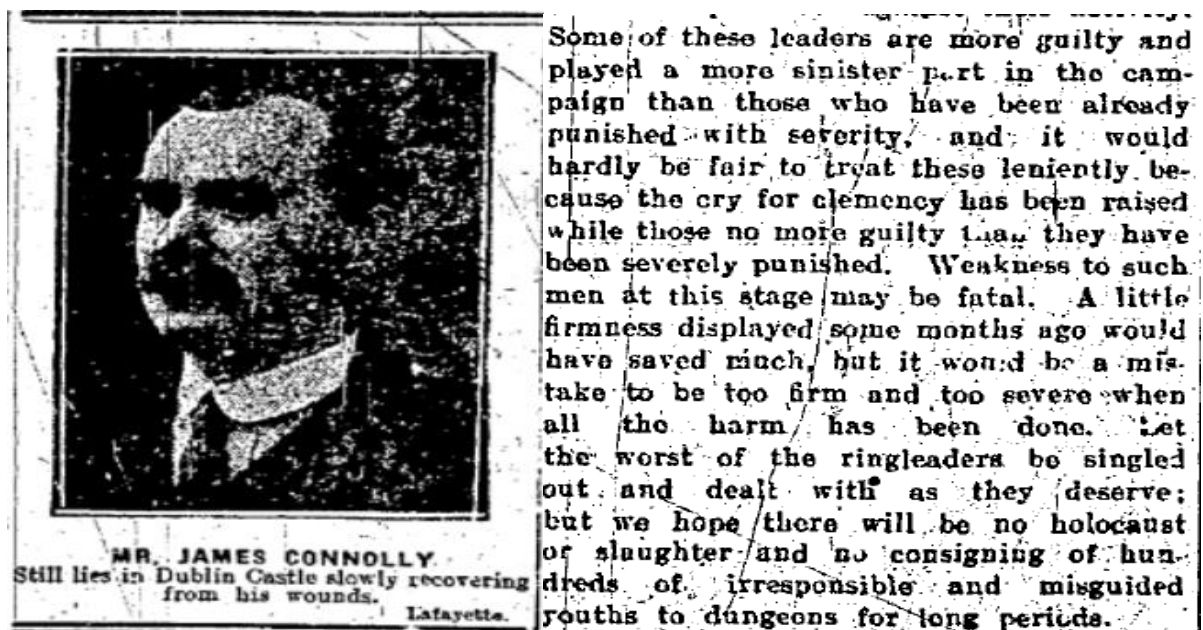
The newspapers chosen for this study (with the exception of the *Irish Press* that was founded in 1931 and closed in 1995) were indeed all hostile towards the Rising and its leaders. In the direct aftermath of the Rising, all Irish newspapers condemned the actions of the insurgents and whole heartedly supported the executions of the leaders (Kenneally, 2008:101). But oddly, ‘the criticism of the British decision to execute the leadership did no emanate from the Irish media. Only one Dublin newspaper the *Freeman’s Journal*, condemned the executions.’ (Foley, 2016:5)

### **2.8.1 Irish & Sunday Independent**

The *Irish Independent*’s origins -as well as its Sunday edition, the *Sunday Independent*, laid ‘lay within the tradition of the Irish Parliamentary Party’ (O’Brien, 2001:3).

In the direct aftermath of the Rising, The *Irish Independent* ‘took a harsh line against the rebels’ (Foley, 2016:5). It had ‘condemned the leaders of the 1916 Rebellion, indirectly calling for the execution of James Connolly’ (Kenneally, 2008:101). O’Brien (1966:11) is of the same view, stating that the paper ‘continued to call for more executions until it got Connolly’. This is unsurprising when one considers the newspaper’s editor at the time, William Martin Murphy’s utter loathing of the trade-unionist and socialist James Connolly, as both men were on opposite sides of the 1913 Dublin lockout. Kostick and Collins (2000:129) quote the paper’s editorial from the 10<sup>th</sup> May 1916 – two days before Connolly’s execution:

If these men are treated with too great leniency they will take it as an indication on the part of the government and the consequences may not be satisfactory. They may be more truculent than ever, and it is therefore necessary that society should be protected against their activity.



*Irish Independent* 10<sup>th</sup> May 1916. Left: James Connolly. Right: Editorial

However, the *Irish Independent* would soon follow the wave of public opinion in the years after 1916 and would hold a more favourable view of the party whose many members had fought in the erroneously named *Sinn Fein Rebellion*: "On that evidence [calling for Connolly's execution], it would seem an unlikely supporter of Sinn Fein but in two years prior to 1919, the paper had moved closer to that party." (Kenneally, 2008:101). This shift may reinforce the notion that the *Irish Independent* is indeed a populist paper.

The first decades after the foundation of the state, O'Brien (2001:3) stated that the *Irish Independent* 'could be and was at times severely critical of many aspects of the Cosgrave administration' and was also 'consistently hostile to any of the movements favouring republicanism.' McGarry (2002) stated that during the years of the 'Free State' the *Irish Independent* 'was characterised by a triumphalist strain of Catholicism, virulent anti-Communism and support for the Pro-Treaty Party [Cumann na nGaedheal, which became Fine Gael]' (McGarry, 2002:68-90). Therefore, although it supported WT Cosgrave's party, the *Irish Independent* had shown that that support was not unwavering. It could, therefore, be inferred that the newspaper was willing to stray from its political allegiances.

O'Brien, (1966:11) stated on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary that it was still, however, 'the main organ of the Catholic bourgeoisie and still the most influential newspaper in that part of the country [the Republic] which this year commemorates the Easter Rising'.

During the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rising in 1991, Kiberd (1991) stated that public opinion was very favourable to the ideals of 1916 but that ‘the workerist media operatives had been so busy “shaping” opinion that they had never bothered to measure it.’ However, one newspaper that did measure popular opinion was the ‘market-driven *Irish Independent*’ which had what was by far the most comprehensive supplement of commemoration to appear in 1991 (Kiberd, 1991:3-4).

### 2.8.2 Irish Times

The *Irish Times*’s beginnings followed nineteenth century newspaper’s ‘practice of absolute cleavage of editorial comment and reportage.’ This division was accentuated, Dudley Edwards (1968:241) goes on to say, by ‘class consciousness’.

In 1916, The *Irish Times* was the only Irish newspaper to be published in Dublin during the Easter Rising (Higgins, 2016) and one of many newspapers that urged the leaders to be executed in 1916 but McGarry (2012) points to the newspaper’s first article on the Rising and suggest that it ‘betrayed a hint of ambivalence’. He stated that it ‘commended aspects of the Rising, including the fact that the rebels ‘had paid for some goods commandeered from local businesses’ but mentioned that tone shifted a week later with the headline ‘The Butchery of Civilians’ and ‘Callous Rebels’ (McGarry:2012:40). That shift of the newspaper’s tone was emphasised by Higgins (2016:9) who stated that the *Irish Times* ‘deftly undermined the legitimacy of the event for its readers with reference to rowdy youths’.

Owing to its unionist origins, it is unsurprising to discover that it had a belligerent view of the leaders of the 1916 Rising who sought to break this union with Britain: ‘The unionist Irish Times, unsurprisingly, called for harsh treatment: “Sedition must be rooted out of Ireland once and for all”’ (Foley, 2016:5).

Kenneally (2008:132) discussed the ideological origins and the *raison d’etre* of the Irish Times: ‘Owned by the industrialist Sir John Arnott and his family, it was historically a conservative and unionist paper, considered in Ireland and Britain as the premier Irish unionist paper and the paper that was seen as representing the unionist population outside of Ulster.’ Therefore, it was not representative of Ulster Unionists’ views but was not hostile, for practical reasons, towards those Unionists who would inevitably find themselves living in the new state of Northern Ireland, as Kenneally (2008:146) goes on to say:

The Irish Times wished no ill will towards the northern state [upon its creation in 1920]. It was one of the few commentators to quickly realise that the new Parliament in Northern Ireland was not to be a temporary feature of the Irish political landscape.

<p><b>EXECUTION OF THIRTEEN OF THE REBEL LEADERS.</b></p>	<p><b>CONDEMNED REBEL'S MARRIAGE.</b></p>	<p><b>CAPTURE OF SIR ROGER CASEMENT.</b></p>
<p><b>SIXTY OTHERS SENTENCED TO PENAL SERVITUDE.</b></p>	<p><b>WIFE AND WIDOW IN ONE NIGHT.</b></p>	<p><b>LANDED FROM A GERMAN SUBMARINE.</b></p>
<p><b>COUNTRESS MARKIEWICZ GETS A LIFE SENTENCE.</b></p> <p>The trials of the rebels were commenced by Field General Courts-Martial in the beginning of last week, and are still going on. Up till Wednesday morning, the 10th May, seventy-eight men had been sentenced in Dublin and one at Queenstown. Of these, thirteen were executed, including five of the signatories of the Irish Republic. Four were sentenced to penal servitude for life; Twenty-one for ten years; Three for eight years; Three for five years; Thirty-one for three years; Two for two years; Three for one year.</p> <p><b>THE FIRST THREE SHOT.</b></p> <p>The following was officially communicated from the Command Headquarters, 1-camp, Dublin, on Wednesday morning, 3rd May:— Three signatories of the notice proclaiming the Irish Republic: F. H. FRANK, T. MacDonagh, and T. J. Clarke.</p> <p>Countess Markiewicz, who was sentenced to death, the sentence being commuted to penal servitude for life, has led a strenuous and varied life. She is a daughter of the late Sir Henry Gwynne-Booth, Bart., a large landowner of Sligo. After being presented at Court she became an art student in Paris, and achieved a certain amount of success. A Russian descent. He had been a member of the Executive of the Gaelic League.</p> <p>Thomas MacDonagh was an M.A. of the National University of Ireland, and a tutor in English literature of University College, Dublin. He was associated with Pearse in conducting St. Enda's School.</p> <p>Thomas J. Clarke represented the old Fenian conspiracy on the "Provisional Government." He was convicted of association with the dynamite outrages in England in the 'eighties, and sentenced to penal servitude. On his release he returned to Dublin, opened a tobacconist and newspaper shop in Great Britain street, and became prominent once more as a speaker at Fenian anniversaries.</p>	<p><b>A TRAGIC CEREMONY.</b></p> <p>Among the men who signed the proclamation of an Irish Republic was Joseph Plunkett. He was tried by court-martial, sentenced to death, and shot on Thursday, 4th May. On Wednesday evening about 5 o'clock a young lady drove up to the jeweller's shop of Mr. E. A. Butler, 22a Grafton street. The jeweller had put his stock away for the night, and was about to shut the shop. The lady asked for a wedding ring of any kind. She was to be married to Joseph Plunkett, who was to be shot next morning. Permission had been granted for the marriage. The jeweller went over his stock, and gave the lady a ring, and she went away. In the Irish Times of Friday, 5th May, there appeared the following marriage notice (which appears in this issue):— PLUNKETT and GIFFORD—May 5, 1916, at St. Paul's, Joseph Plunkett to Grace Gifford. It is understood that the marriage ceremony took place a short time before the execution. A sister of the lady who was married under such tragic circumstances, was the wife of Thomas MacDonagh, who was also executed.</p> <p><b>A GLOOMY CEREMONY.</b></p>	<p><b>NOW IN THE TOWER OF LONDON.</b></p> <p>A few days before the rebellion broke out an attempt was made to land arms on the west and south coast of Ireland. The arms were conveyed in a disguised German ship, said to be escorted by a German submarine. When challenged and chased the vessel was scuttled, and a number of men taken prisoners. A small boat was landed at a separate spot with two passengers, and one of these when captured was found to be Sir Roger Casement. He was taken to Dublin and thence to the Tower of London, where he now occupies the cell in which Lady, the spy, spent the night before he was shot. The Press Bureau has stated that evidence as to his proceedings in Germany since the outbreak of the war will be produced at his trial, which will take place before three English judges.</p> <p><b>LANDED FROM A GERMAN SUBMARINE.</b></p> <p>In the House of Lords on Thursday, 27th April, with reference to the capture of Sir Roger Casement.</p> <p>Lord LANDOWNE said a German vessel disguised as a Dutch trader, with a submarine, made her appearance off the west coast of Ireland. From the submarine they landed in a collapsible boat three individuals, of whom two were made prisoners, one being Sir Roger</p>

*Irish Times editorials April 29<sup>th</sup>, May 6<sup>th</sup>, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 1916*

By the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rising in 1991, the *Irish Times* was still hostile, according to Kiberd (1991:3), to the ideals of the 1916 Rising and was 'determined that Ireland should complete the move from nationalistic autocracy to workerist conformism that they [*Irish Times*] left no space for tedious interludes of liberalism.'

Heartfield & Rooney (2015:21) discussed the *Irish Times*'s negative views towards the Rising on the occasion of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1991: 'The nay-sayers had the *Irish Times* editorial writer on their side. On 29 March, they published: "The Easter Rising was a calculated conspiracy to spill blood. Those who planned it knew that most of it would be that of innocent uninvolved people – as was the case". It was profoundly undemocratic. Its object was to sweep away moderation and compromise'

Heartfield & Rooney (2015:12) also made the case that the *Irish Times* was looking forward to the centenary with trepidation cited Dennis Kennedy from the aforementioned newspaper on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2013: 'With the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the rising approaching the *Irish Times* was genuinely worried. "The Rising was a complex event", they [the *Irish Times*] wrote: "There is a danger that shorn of context, it can be presented as a glorification of the cult of violence, as happened in 1966."'

### 2.8.3 The Irish Press

As has been already stated, the *Irish Press* was not in existence at the time of the Rising. Its 1931 beginnings were linked with Fianna Fail and its founder Eamon deValera. In *DeValera, Fianna Fail and the Irish Press*, Mark O'Brien details this link between the party and the newspaper:



The fortunes of the *Irish Press* were irrevocably intertwined with the fortunes of Fianna Fail. In the early years the paper paid back this debt by consistently promoting deValera, the Fianna Fail party and its objectives. To this end, the *Irish Press* played a crucial role in the development of the party by providing a forum for the dissemination of ideology to the masses while conversely giving supporters something practical to affiliate to. Since deValera was the founder of both party and paper, he ultimately controlled both. During his terms as Taoiseach, the support of the *Irish Press* was unwavering as successive deValera governments pursued policies of social conservatism, protectionism, self-sufficiency and neutrality. Since these were the doctrines of Fianna Fail, so too were they the doctrines of the *Irish Press*. As the first edition of the newspaper stated, it would support Fianna Fail, 'but only because the philosophy and aspirations' of the party were 'identical with its own philosophy and aspirations'. (O'Brien, 2001:2)

In the above citation, O'Brien (2001) principally deals with the infancy period of the *Irish Press* and not that of the 1960s which is the more pertinent period for the purposes of this study. Owing to the strong links between Fianna Fail and the Irish President during the fiftieth anniversary of the Rising, the *Irish Press* would have looked favourably on deValera during the commemorative events in 1966.

During this time, the Irish newspaper industry - and the *Irish Press* in particular - were at a somewhat of a crossroads. The newspaper's retrograde 'policies of social conservatism, protectionism, self-sufficiency and neutrality' (O'Brien, 2012:2) were being challenged as 'Ireland began to notice the outside world and to want some of the new freedoms and the new sophistications that were flowing from America and Europe.' (O'Brien, 2012:133).

Attempts at bringing the *Irish Press* into the 'swinging sixties' were made. O'Brien (2001:134) observed that the newspaper's editor Tim Pat Coogan did indeed do 'his best to drag the paper into the modern era and that he also 'sought to make the *Irish Press* a paper that celebrated Irishness, albeit a more modern version.'

In his memoir, Tim Pat Coogan spoke about this uncertain time in his memoir *Tim Pat Coogan: A Memoir*: 'The Paper wasn't keeping up with the times in terms of expanding coverage or promotion' (Coogan, 2008:258).

## **2.8 Conclusion**

In conclusion, The Easter Rising has polarised Irish society these past one hundred years and has been the subject of heated debate throughout those years. It has become embedded in the Irish psyche and its commemorations have been used by various governments over the years for party political, societal and economic reasons. It was, at times, an event that the establishments, both North and South of the border, would rather have forgot and has been blamed for inspiring violence in Northern Ireland.

Irish newspapers have expressed various and differing views over the years from the 50<sup>th</sup>, to the 75<sup>th</sup> through to the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The *Irish Times*, borne of a unionist tradition (Dudley Edwards, 1968), it has been mostly hostile- while remaining fair and balanced- to the ideals and legacy of the Rising. The Irish Press, owing to its links to the 'Republican Party', Fianna fail and its founder Eamon deValera, would have had a more favourable views of the Rising, while the 'market-driven' *Independent* has altered its views on the rebellion to reflect public opinion of the day.

Following the above review of the literature of the Easter Rising and its many commemorations, it is now necessary to establish whether each paper had a 'position' in relation to the Rising over the course of the last century. This study will now analyse the coverage in the biggest selling Irish dailies and Sunday newspapers on the occasion of the centenary anniversary in 2016 and then contrast these result with those from 1966 to determine a shift in attitudes and focus of the Irish print media in relation to the Rising. The following methodological chapter will determine how this will be done.

### 3. Methodology

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter demonstrated how the 1916 Easter Rising -and its commemorations- has elicited much debate amongst those in academics and journalists. Some viewed it as a legitimate cleanly fought struggle for independence (Heartfield and Rooney, 2015). Others deplored its legacy of violence and bloodshed (Myers, 2007). Remembering and comprehending events that elicit wildly differing views has always been a difficult and unenviable task. (Higgins, 2007;2016). This task does not just fall upon academics and governments however, it also must be undertaken by the media which offers a 'trigger for remembering' (Schmidt, 2008:198).

William Butler Yeats's reflective poem *Easter:1916* famously concludes with the words '*A terrible beauty is born*'. As the previous chapter ascertained, the 1916 Rising is the story of how a nation state came into being. Therefore, it is to be expected that this event would be referenced continually in the Irish media – especially at important anniversary milestones. The methodology for this study was devised to ascertain as thoroughly and accurately as possibly how leading Irish newspapers reported on the commemorative periods of the Easter Rising at two seminal moments: the fiftieth and one hundredth anniversaries in 1966 and 2016.

The study will utilise the *mixed method approach* (Creswell, 2003), and will apply both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The quantitative aspect will quantify articles and photographs from each period. It will reveal trends and themes focused upon by each of the newspapers selected for analysis – and to what extent. The qualitative approach will apply content analysis.

#### **3.2 Qualitative and quantitative analyses**

A content analysis is mainly *qualitative* (Berelson, 1952). Hsieh and Shannon (2005) define a qualitative analysis as "a research method for the subjective interpretations of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns". Bryman (2008, 366-367) states that qualitative research tends to "be concerned with words rather than numbers" which is in contrast to *quantitative* research.

While qualitative will be the overriding form of research used for this study, it will not, however, be the exclusive one. There will be elements of the study that will be quantitative which is a form of

research which 'uses numbers and statistical methods'. It tends to be based on 'numerical measurements of specific aspects of phenomenon' (King, et al, 1994). There are benefits in comparing the number of documents in relation to the Rising, from one newspaper to the next, in order to ascertain which devoted more coverage to the theme of this dissertation than the other. While incomplete, there are merits in focusing on numerical data.

(King, et al, 1994) further states that the styles of quantitative and qualitative research are very different.

Therefore, it can be inferred that the following research will be best defined as - although mostly qualitative- a *mixed methods approach*. Creswell (1999;2003) defines this simply as research which 'brings together approaches that are included in both quantitative and qualitative formats' and goes to say that it is quite common for any research to be a mixture of both, although this study does principally rely upon the *qualitative*

The principal way in which the selected newspapers will be analysed in order to draw conclusions will be – primarily, but not exclusively - through *content analysis*. Berelson's thesis, *Content Analysis in Communication Research* (1952) is widely considered as one of the first comprehensive studies on this form of analysis. He defined content analysis as a 'research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication.' (Berelson, 1952: 18). Anders Hansen's (1998) *Mass Communication Research Methods* describes *content analysis* similarly and succinctly as 'a method for the systematic analysis of communication content' (Hansen, 1998:90) The main goal of a content analysis is to examine 'how news, drama, advertising and entertainment output reflect social and cultural issues, values and phenomena' (Hansen, 1998:92).

### **3.3 Data analysis and coding**

This section (3.3) will explain the preliminary steps and methods that will be employed during data collection phase of the research.

Due to the high number of articles collected that pertained to the Easter Rising between the dates of 10<sup>th</sup> March 1966 and 10<sup>th</sup> May 1966 and the dates between 27<sup>th</sup> February 2016 and 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016 (1125), it will be necessary to begin a preliminary analysis of the data (i.e. newspaper articles) by undergoing the method of *open coding* which is a process whereby 'the data is examined line by line and various emerging themes are identified' (Black, 2009: p.25). In other words, the researcher does not anticipate the themes that will arise prior to the commencement of data collection. To the

contrary, the data collection will inform the categories that will later be decided upon by the content analyst.

Upon completion of *open coding* which is similarly defined by Creswell (2003) as 'generating categories of information', researchers must then refine their parameters by *selective coding* which explicates 'a story from the interconnection of these [preliminary] categories' (Creswell, 2003:191).

In this case, each article relating to the Easter Rising was examined by the researcher and was categorised in one of the chosen themes that are the primary focus of an article (see *Table 1.1*).

### **3.4 Data Preparation and Analysis**

Before any documentation can be collected, a process must be established whereby the documentation – in this case newspaper articles- will be categorised. This process is referred to as a *coding schedule*. A coding schedule, similar to questionnaire in that it includes 'variables which are to be coded... each article...sets out the values or coding possibilities associated with the variable' (Hansen et al., 1998, p. 116). In other words, each article collected will be categorised and sub-categorised according to the researcher's interpretation (see *Table 1.1*). Creswell (2003:182) tells us that there are many characteristics to qualitative research. The characteristic most relevant for this particular study is his assertion that qualitative research is fundamentally interpretative. Berg, (2009:339) agrees with Creswell (2003) that Researchers will rely on their interpretive skills to decode any data collected and further adds that researchers 'with a general interpretative orientation are likely to organise or reduce data in order to uncover patterns of human activity, action and meaning.'

A 'strategy of inquiry' in a qualitative study Creswell (2003) tells us 'originates out of disciplines and flow throughout the process of research'. The most suitable qualitative strategy for this study of the sampled newspapers is *grounded theory*. Creswell (2003:182) also states that 'within this strategy the researcher attempts to derive a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of participants in a study'. This process involves using 'multiple stages of data collection and the refinement and interrelationship of categories of information'. In other words, using *grounded theory*, the researcher should categorise data collected along broad lines before refining the parameters of research until fixed parameters have been reached.

The means by which the data is categorised and sub categorised is, therefore mainly, through the interpretive approach. This approach as Miles, et. al (1994) state is one of three; the other two being: *social anthropological approaches* and *collaborative research approach*.

The table below (1.1) illustrates the content analyst’s coding schedule. It sets out how the data will be categorised and labelled. Each category has been decided upon in order to ensure maximum clarity as “a set of categories must validly correspond to the specific constructs referred to in the research questions and must be reliably interpreted by coders” (Wear and Lin, 2008: 284)

As Miles et, al. (1994) advises that it is best to categorise the data collected and then to further categorise it. This will reduce the sample and therefore clear themes will emerge from his exercise. In the case of constructing a coding schedule, the researcher will compartmentalise every theme observed from the data collected- 26 initial categories. From these categories, only the ten most recurring one from each newspaper will be analysed. Therefore, the ‘FOCUS’ category in the table below (1.1) will vary from one newspaper to another in accordance to the most popular themes identified. The following chapter – *Findings*- will examine each newspaper’s ten most popular themes once the sorting process has occurred. Furthermore, these categories are not mutually exclusive - one article can have more than one focus and therefore can be placed in two separate categories.

**Table 1.1: Coding schedule**

Irish Press Coverage of the Easter Rising commemorative periods 1966 and 2016	
NEWSPAPER	<i>Irish Press (1966 only)</i> <i>Irish Independent</i> <i>Sunday Independent</i> <i>Irish Times</i>
DATE: MONTH/DAY/YEAR	E.g.: Easter Sunday 1966: <b>04/10/66</b> Easter Sunday 2016: <b>03/27/16</b>
--/--/--	

PAGE NUMBER: _p'NUMBER'	E.g.: _p12
THEME	Expressed in lower caps separated by an underscore (_)  e.g.: 'arts_president'
FOCUS	Various
NEWSPAPER JUDGMENT ON THE EASTER RISING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Somewhat negative</li> <li>▪ Negative</li> <li>▪ Somewhat positive</li> <li>▪ Positive</li> </ul>
VOCABULARY (KEY WORDS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Commemoration' or 'Commemorative'</li> <li>• 'Republican'</li> <li>• 'IRA' or 'Provisional IRA'</li> <li>• 'President'</li> <li>• 'GAA'</li> <li>• '1916'</li> <li>• 'School'</li> <li>• 'Mass' or 'Service'</li> <li>• 'Rebels'</li> <li>• 'Terror'</li> <li>• 'Hero'</li> <li>• 'Sinn Fein'</li> <li>• 'Northern Ireland' or 'the North' or 'the Six Counties'</li> </ul>
USE OF PICTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Yes</li> <li>➤ No</li> </ul>

### **3.5 Sample**

As this study concerns itself with periods which reflected upon the Easter Rising, the timeline selected had to be narrowed down to a period most associated with the Rising itself which is the day the Easter Rising is traditionally commemorated: Easter Sunday.

To gain a substantial sample, the research periods chosen for this study were eight weeks; four weeks either side of Easter Sunday 1966 and Easter Sunday 2016. The reasoning behind this decision is due to the 1916 Easter Rising always been officially commemorated by the state on that day - and not the actual date of the commencement of the rebellion, which was 24<sup>th</sup> April 1916. Therefore, Easter Sunday would be the focal date around which the data collection would centre. A timeline of eight weeks provides ample opportunity to acquire an accurate sense of both the leadup to and aftermath of, the commemorations.

Although the timelines for both 1966 and 2016 are the same (8 weeks), the dates differ from one year to the other. The Christian holiday of Easter is based on the lunar calendar and not the Gregorian one, which explains the timelines being marginally different. Table (1.2) below illustrates this:

**Table 1.2: Timelines of analysis**

Year	Commencement date of analysis	<b>Easter Sunday</b>	Final date of analysis
1966	10 <sup>th</sup> March	<b>10<sup>th</sup> April</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> May
2016	27 <sup>th</sup> February	<b>27<sup>th</sup> March</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> April

The timeline in 1966 mostly extends into the fiftieth anniversaries of the execution of the first 15 leaders of the Easter Rising which took place between 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 12<sup>th</sup> May 1916. However, the 2016 timeline does not extend to the anniversary of these same events. To conserve uniformity and maintain the same period of eight weeks either side of Easter Sunday, the research did not take into account any article pertaining to the Easter Rising after the 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

The newspapers chosen are broadsheet newspapers based exclusively in the Republic of Ireland. Due to the large amount of coverage that the fiftieth and one hundredth anniversaries attracted on both the broadcast and print media, not only in Ireland but also in Northern Ireland; the rest of the United Kingdom; Europe; as well as in North America, only the Irish print press was considered for this particular study.

This study mainly concerns itself with arguably two of the most momentous of these anniversaries: the fiftieth and hundredth. Therefore, all documents collected and analysed will be from these two selected years.

The two daily Irish and the Sunday newspapers with the highest circulation in the first six months of 2016 (as seen in *Table 1.3*) were chosen for this study as they represented the broadest readership



available in Ireland: the *Irish Times*, the *Irish Independent*, and the *Sunday Independent*. To ensure a comparative analysis, the same newspapers will be used for 1966. In addition, the *Irish Press* will also be part of the 1966 analysis but not part of the comparative analysis, for reasons stated in the previous chapter.

### 1.3 Newspaper Circulation

Newspaper	Circulation: Jan-Jun 2016
Irish Independent	102,537
Irish Times	72,011
Sunday Independent	199,210
Irish Press	N/A

Source: <http://newsbrandsireland.ie/data-centre/circulation/>

Before any analysis involving newspapers is carried out, it is important to examine each of these newspapers' ideological positions throughout their history but especially -more salient to this study- in 1966 and 2016. This will offer context to the researcher when interpreting and codifying the data

#### 3.5.1 *Irish Independent & Sunday Independent*

The *Irish* and *Sunday Independent* are owned by *Irish News and Media*, the largest newspaper publisher in Ireland (newsbrandireland.ie, 2017) which also publishes tabloids such as the *Evening Herald* and the *Sunday World*, among others. *Independent News and Media* was run from 1973 by Tony O'Reilly until Denis O'Brien – and his media company, Commicorps - acquired a 29% shareholding in 2012.

A broadsheet (but has in recent times been available in tabloid size), The *Irish Independent* was traditionally considered a nationalist, Catholic newspaper (McGarry, 2002) and was still described in the year of the Rising's fiftieth anniversary in 1966 as 'bourgeois' and – similar to McGarry (2002)- an 'organ of the Catholic Church' (O'Brien, 1966:11). It was observed, however, that despite its traditionally centre right leanings, it was above all else a populist and 'market driven' newspaper. (Kiberd, 1991).

#### 3.5.2 *Irish Times*

The *Irish Times* emerged as unionist newspaper (Dudley Edwards, 1968). Since 1974, it has been operated by the *Irish Times Trust*. It is viewed as a quality, well-respected broadsheet which has a broad middle-class readership (Clarke and O'Neill, 2000; Fahy, Trench, & Clancy, 2009; O'Brien, 2008).

The Sunday Independent, first published in 1905 as the Sunday edition of the Irish Independent and like its daily counterpart, supported *Cumann na nGaedheal* and its successor *Fine Gael* (McCormack, 2001).

It has continually been an ardent critic of both Sinn Fein and the Provisional IRA (Coogan, 1996).

### **3.5.3 Irish Press**

The Irish Press was founded in 1931, thus being the only newspaper sampled that was neither in operation at the time of the Easter Rising nor was it in print in 2016 during the centennial coverage. The paper had folded in 1995 due to continual poor sales (Coogan, 2008).

The reasoning behind the inclusion of the *Irish Press* derives from the newspaper's strong links to Fianna Fail and its founder Eamon deValera, who was also the founder of the *Irish Press* (O'Brien, 2001). During the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemoration, de Valera was the President of Ireland, therefore, it was considered relevant to include this newspaper's coverage as part of this study.

Until the 1960s, The *Irish Press* pursued 'policies of social conservatism, protectionism, self-sufficiency and neutrality' reflecting the policies of Fianna Fail (O'Brien, 2001:2). However, when Sean Lemass became Taoiseach and began to liberalise the Irish economy, the newspaper began to fall behind in terms of sales and began a process of modernisation (O'Brien, 2001; Coogan, 2008).

### **3.5.4 Others**

The Irish version of the Sunday Times was not considered for this study for the following reason: although the Irish version dealing with issues pertaining to Irish society, including the Easter Rising, it is nonetheless, a British newspaper and, therefore, does not meet the required criteria to be considered.

## **3.6 Data Collection**

All articles from these newspapers, with exception if the *Irish Times*, were accessed and downloaded from the *Irish Newspaper Archive* resource which permits users to access digital version of the hard copies of the aforementioned newspapers. This is mostly since 'the Internet has opened completely new avenues for research by making available data that used to be prohibitively expensive to collect and therefore largely ignored by the research community' (Wear and Lin, 2008:275), it therefore made this study viable in the first place.

Using the 'browse' option – which allows researchers to manually scroll through each page of the digital copy of an Irish newspaper on any given date on the website, allows a much more

comprehensive and rigorous analysis. It does not rely upon computer-generated results as would have been the case had *Lexis Nexis* been used.

Articles from the *Irish Times* were collected using the newspaper's own online archives. Contrary to the *Irish Newspaper Archive*, the *Irish Times*'s online archives do not offer the option to scroll through each page of the newspaper. The researcher, therefore, must use the 'Keyword' option in order to generate relevant articles to this study. The term 'Easter+Rising' was entered into the 'keyword' box for the selected periods in 1966 and 2016, respectively. However, the more generic and singular term '1916' was subsequently used in order to generate the maximum number of relevant results.

### **3.7 Ethics and challenges**

During the undertaking of any research, a researcher must endeavour to hold up the ethical principles of research which include being aware of any risks that may arise, not only to the researcher but to any participants. Consent must be informed, the ability to withdraw and to protect the participants' anonymity (if required) must always be options available. (Berelson, 1952).

As aforementioned, this study will be a content analysis of Irish newspapers. Therefore, no participants – apart from the sole researcher- were involved during the course of this study, thus eliminating any fear of breaching any ethical principle. There are, however, challenges that may arise.

As with any human endeavour, there is the factor of human error that must be taken into account when scrutinising the researcher's choices of categories, for instance: "content analysts rarely have the imagination to list all relevant categories" (Krippendorff, 2004:185). Furthermore, there may be issues of complacency as "coding is the most labour intensive and least intellectually stimulating aspect of content analysis" (Wear and Lin, 2008:287)

Other issues – identified by Krippendorff (2004)- that may arise when conducting a content analysis include 'variance of the target' whereby the researcher's set categories may not fully fit the data collected and 'confidence levels' which refer to the level of confidence the researcher can place on the sample collected. The solution to low confidence levels Krippendorff (2004:186) states is larger sample size. The third issue is that of 'the appropriateness of the construct'; the content analysts' structure (in this case the coding schedule as seen in *Table 1.1*) may not be applicable once the analysis has begun as there is a possibility that 'contributing conditions could alter the text/target relationship'

and ‘may not be generalizable to the circumstances in which the actual content analysis is conducted’ (Krippendorff, 2004:190).

### **3.8 Conclusion**

Utilising the methodologies stated above, the researcher will gather data (articles and photographs) relating to the Easter Rising during the two aforementioned timelines, in 1966 and 2016. This collection will be done using the *Irish Newspaper Archive* and the *Irish Times Archive* search engines. All data will undergo an initial process of categorisation known as *grounded theory*, before the ten most popular categories from each analysed newspaper will be scrutinised in more detail. Although all data gathered will comprise the quantitative aspect of the research, only the ten most popular categories from each paper will comprise the qualitative aspect of the research and undergo an interpretive analysis. The results of this process will be presented in the next chapter, *Findings*.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1 Introduction

The following findings were arrived at by using the *open coding method* (Black, 2009) and *grounded theory* (Creswell, 2003) which advocate categorising the data. Then subsequently, the data was further processed by *selective coding* (Creswell, 2003) which reduces the field of categories even further. In total, 1152 preliminary articles and photographs that dealt with the Easter Rising were amassed and 26 themes were identified. Following this, the ten most recurrent themes from each newspaper were analysed according to the researcher's interpretive skills. Before any comparative analysis from 1966 and 2016 can be undertaken, the findings from each period will be first presented separately.

### 4.2 Findings 1966

#### 4.2.1 Introduction

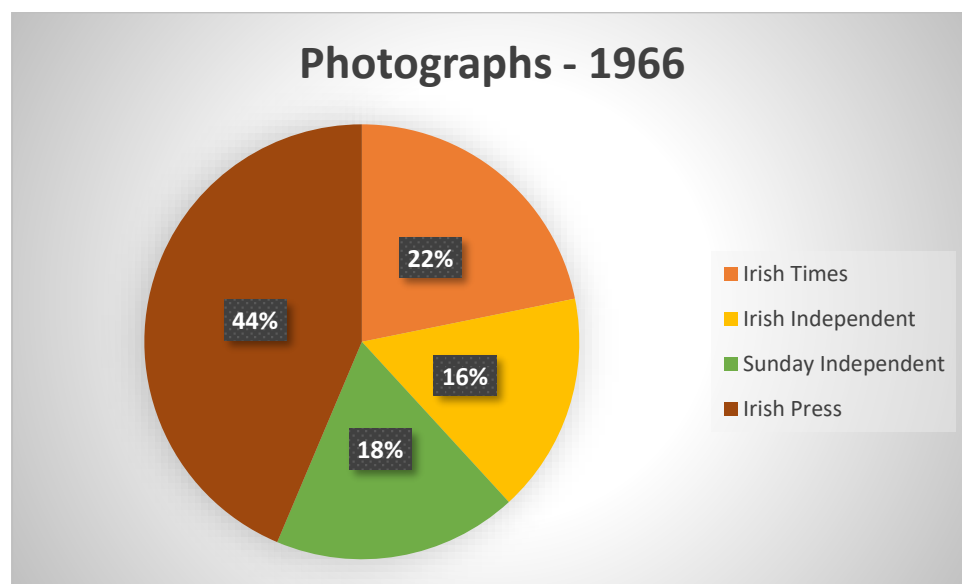
The following findings are from the four newspapers selected, namely; the *Irish Times*, the *Irish Independent*, the *Sunday Independent* and the *Irish Press*. The period chosen for the content analysis was the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2016 to 10<sup>th</sup> May 1966. The results presented will deal with an overview of the results, i.e. number of articles and photographs and the overall tone adopted, before interpreting each newspaper's editorial decisions in details. The numbers in parenthesis next to the most recurring themes mark their place in the standings.

There were a total of 571 articles and photographs that were analysed. The *Irish Times* devoted the most coverage to the commemorations with 228, followed by the *Irish Press* (163), the *Irish Independent* (140) and the *Sunday Independent* (40).

The latter newspaper's position should not be scrutinised too much as it is the only Sunday newspaper that was analysed, thus, would invariably yield far fewer results than the others. Indeed, the following results will see the *Sunday Independent* yielding the fewest articles for this very same reason.

The number of photographs analysed was 55. Nearly half of these photographs (24) were found in the *Irish Press* – the most amount. This was followed by the *Irish Times* (12), the *Irish Independent* (10) and the *Sunday Independent* (9). The following graph (1.1) demonstrates these results in percentage.

## 2.1 Photographs -1966



The overall tone of each article was determined by the content analyst's interpretive skills as per Creswell (2003) and Hsieh and Shannon (2005). Elements, such as the vocabulary and the content of photographs, as well as the general tone of articles, determined into which of four categories along a spectrum each article would be compartmentalised. These four categories on this spectrum were as follows: 'Negative', 'Somewhat Negative', 'Somewhat Positive' and 'Positive'. Furthermore, to ensure that this interpretive exercise was as objective and accurate as possible, the spectrum chosen was not a binary 'Positive/Negative' one. The introduction of the two additional 'Somewhat' categories were to ensure as nuanced and complex results as possible. However, although factors such as personal judgement can be reduced, they cannot be completely negated.

Articles categorised as 'Negative' were those which were considered to be overtly negative in their tone and the vocabulary used, both in the headline and in the body of the text, whereas articles categorised as 'Somewhat Negative' were those that leant mostly towards negativity but overtly so.

For example, the headline 'Warning against narrow appeal of 1916 Jubilee' from the *Irish Independent*, 21<sup>st</sup> March 1966, p.5 was categorised as 'Negative' as the vocabulary in the headline ('warning' and

‘narrow’) and the body (‘hesitant’) were considered overtly negative. However, ‘Minister bans commemoration parade in Derry’ from the *Irish Times* on 7<sup>th</sup> April, p.1. was considered ‘Somewhat Negative’. Although the headline suggests it should be categorised as ‘Negative’, the body of the text was not coded in a negative way and in fact ended with the following: ‘the route of the proposed parade had been designed to give offence to no one’ and therefore was considered not overtly negative.

Articles categorised as ‘Positive’ were those which were considered to be overtly positive in their tone and the vocabulary used, both in the headline and in the body of the text, whereas articles categorised as ‘Somewhat Positive’ were those that leant mostly towards positivity but overtly so.

For example, the headline ‘Arbour Hill a “holy spot”’ from the *Irish Independent* 25<sup>th</sup> April 1966, p.14 was categorised as ‘Positive’ as the vocabulary used in the headline (‘holy’) and the body text (‘patriot’ and ‘a fitting close’) were overtly positive. However, ‘Pearse and MacNeill not incompatible’ from the *Irish Times* 29<sup>th</sup> April 1966, p.10, was considered ‘Somewhat Positive’. Although the vocabulary in the headline or indeed the body text was not considered to be coded in one way or another, the tone of the article was somewhat sympathetic to Patrick Pearse and therefore was considered to be somewhat positive.

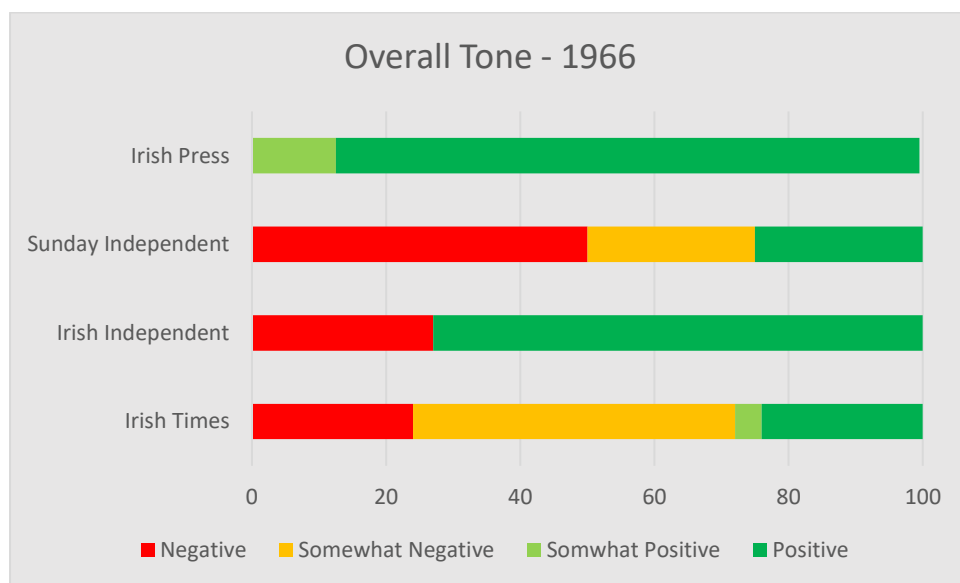
For the purposes of clarity, all articles that were considered as ‘straight’ (i.e. the Easter Rising was mentioned without any discernible positive or negative tones) were discounted from this part of the analysis. Examples of such articles include ‘T.E. viewers will see the G.A.A. pageant’ from the *Irish Times* on 23<sup>rd</sup> March, p.1 (informing viewers that a 1916 GAA pageant will be shown on T.V) and ‘Ceannt plaque unveiled’, an article detailing the unveiling of a plaque dedicated to Eamon Ceannt in *Irish Independent* on 9<sup>th</sup> May, p.7. Articles such as these were interpreted as neither negative nor positive, but ‘straight’ or ‘neutral’.

The *Irish Press* had overwhelmingly the most positive coverage of the commemorative period. The analysis could not reasonably deem any article overtly ‘Negative’ or even ‘Somewhat Negative’. On the contrary, 87% of the coverage was positive, whereas 13% of the coverage was ‘Somewhat Positive’. The inference from this is that the *Irish Press* was at this time seeking to modernise and become relevant to a readership that viewed it as retrograde (Coogan, 2008). Furthermore, the newspaper had been founded by the President of Ireland during the jubilee year – Eamon deValera (O’Brien, 2001). These reasons could, therefore, explain the unanimously positive results.

Like the *Irish Press*, the *Irish Independent’s* coverage was unambiguous as both ‘Somewhat’ categories yielded no results. Its views, however, were mostly favourable of the Rising with 67% of articles

categorised as ‘Positive’, double the number of articles categorised as ‘Negative’: 33%. As a populist and ‘bourgeois’ newspaper (Kiberd, 1991; O’Brien, 1966:11), it is unsurprising that the *Irish Independent* followed the tide of public opinion – as it always had done – and viewed the celebrations of 1966 and the events of 1916 in a more approving than disapproving manner. The negative tones could be attributed to the newspaper’s support of Fine Gael (McGarry, 2002) and, therefore, would be less than complimentary towards the Fianna Fail government’s handling of the commemoration or indeed towards the most famous veteran of the Rising and then President, Eamon de Valera.

## 2.2 Overall Tone - 1966



The negative tone, although somewhat more nuanced, was more pronounced in the Sunday edition of the above newspaper – the *Sunday Independent*. 50% of the coverage was considered ‘Negative’, while 25% was ‘Somewhat Negative’, leaving 25% that was ‘Positive’. The contrast in tone between the *Sunday Independent* and the daily version of the newspaper may be explained by the relatively low sample of articles analysed (14).

Finally, the *Irish Times*’s overall tone – although the far more nuanced of the newspapers analysed – was mainly ‘Somewhat Negative’ (48%). Equal coverage was afforded to both ‘Positive’ and ‘Negative’ toned articles (24%), leaving a mere 4% of articles whose tone were thought of as ‘Somewhat Positive’. The favoured tone adopted by the *Irish Times* may well be attributed to its unionist roots (Dudley Edwards, 1968) and the then amelioration of relations between the leaders of both North (Captain Terence O’Neill) and Southern (Sean Lemmas) governments. Although the coverage was not favourable towards both the Easter Rising and its commemoration, it was not vociferously so but was rather considered by the content analysis leaning somewhat in a negative way. This could be due the *Irish Times*’s reputation for being fair and balanced.

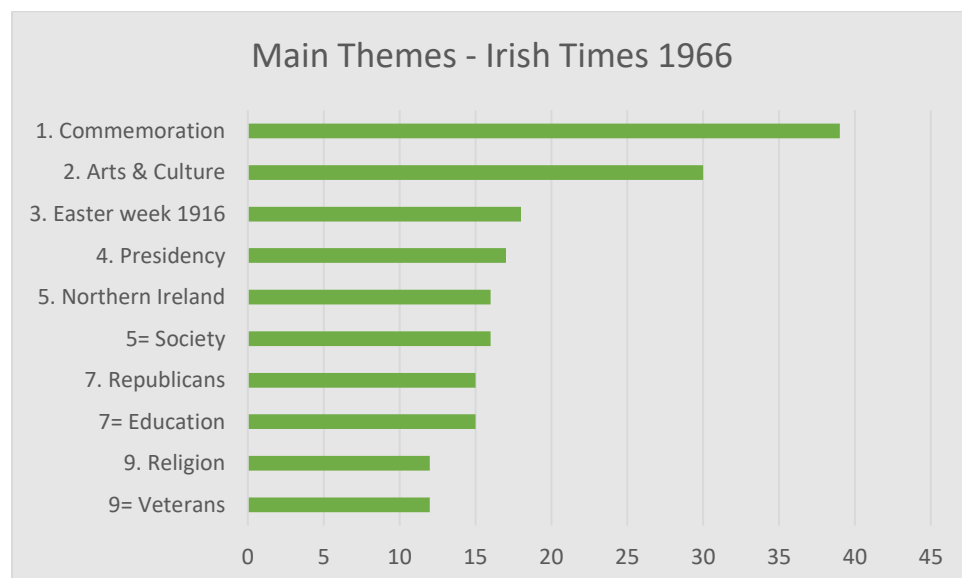


Each sampled newspaper's results will now be presented and scrutinised before any comparative analysis and conclusion can be drawn. The *Irish Times* was the only newspaper analysed whose results – as aforementioned in the previous chapter- were not arrived at through the search engine *Irish Newspaper Archives*.

#### 4.2.2 *Irish Times*

Utilising the *Irish Times*'s archives, the term '1916' was used in the 'Keyword' box and the timeline was set as aforementioned. As per Creswell (2003), a broad term such as '1916' was used in order to generate a maximum amount of results, before the content analyst begins to narrow down the field of results. 691 articles were generated by the search, 228 of those were considered for analysis. Creswell (2003) states that themes will reveal themselves through the analysis. Graph 2.3 below lists in descending order the ten most recurring themes that the *Irish Times* focused on.

#### 2.3 Main Themes – *Irish Times* 1966



The primary focus during the eight weeks leading up, and following, Easter Sunday was 'Commemoration' (1); articles whose primary focus was any event dealing with commemorating the Easter Rising rather than the Easter Rising itself.

'Arts & Culture' was a major focus of the *Irish Times*, with articles focusing on plays (*The Plough and the Stars*), books, and pageants organised by the GAA but also by so-called 'foreign sports' clubs such

# A climate needed for culture

**H**AD we mistaken the ideal of a Gaelic culture and interpreted it to mean that only work bearing the stamp of "fíor-Gael" was worthy of cultural consideration? Asked Mrs. Mairín O'Byrne, Dublin City Librarian, when she lectured at the Institute of Public Administration, Lansdowne road, Dublin, last night: it was the fourth lecture in the series, "Public Affairs 1916-

Figure 1: Irish Times, 23rd March 1966, page 11

However most of these did not feature an accompanying photograph of the President. For instance, there was no close-up photograph of President deValera at the commemorative parade up O'Connell Street in Dublin on Easter Sunday (see Figure 3).

Conversely, photographs of the President that did feature often had him in the fore-ground of the photograph (see Figure 1), emphasising his age.

Terms such as 'fear' (16<sup>th</sup> March, p.1) and 'skirmishes' (18<sup>th</sup> April, p.1), were typical of the lexicon employed when discussing Northern Ireland (5=). 33% of articles in this category directly dealt with activities of dissident Republicans (7=), a category that was also amongst the ten most featured.

as football and rugby. This would suggest that the newspaper did not solely concentrate on all things *Gaelic* when reporting on the arts and culture. This is demonstrated by Figure 2, a piece from the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March deriding the exclusion of non-Gaelic culture.

'Events of Easter 1916' (3) was also a popular focus of the newspaper. Not only did it focus on the leaders of the Rising – with Patrick Pearse described as 'humourless' and 'disliked' (21<sup>st</sup> March, p.8.), it also profiled the stories of lesser known figures, such as

the pacifist Francis Sheehy-Skeffington (7<sup>th</sup> April, p.13). Articles categorised under 'Presidency' (4) focused on the then upcoming presidential elections, but mostly on events attended by Eamon deValera during the commemorative period.



Figure 2: Irish Times, 15th April 1966, p.4

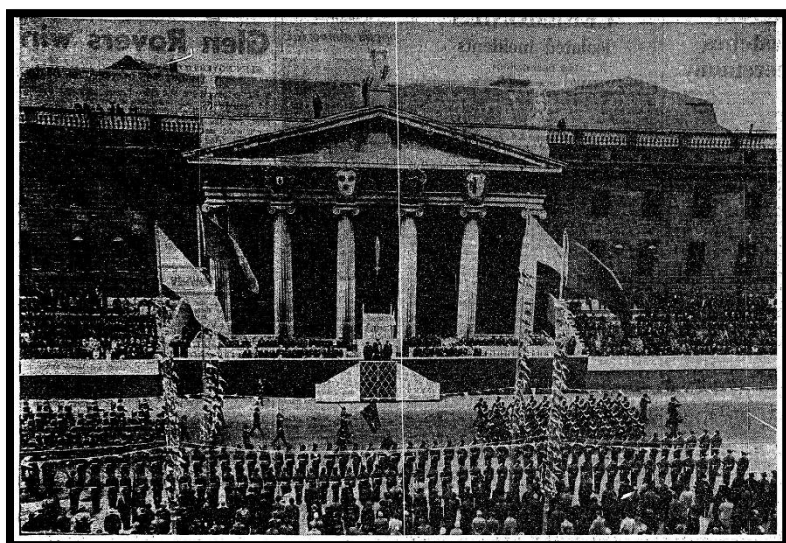


Figure 3: *Irish Times*, 11th April 1966

'Society' (5=), featured on a wide range of topical stories from March and April 1966, from a flower show (19th April, p.4), unrest amongst trade unionists (29<sup>th</sup> March, p.11) to economic matters (2 April, p.11) and travellers (29<sup>th</sup> March, p.7).

'Education' (7) – articles whose focus was on university lectures or activities carried out in national or secondary schools in relation the Rising, such as Dublin City Council adding four scholarships to its scheme to commemorate the Rising.

'Religion' and 'Veterans' were joint ninth in *Graph 2.3*, with the former focusing on not only Catholic masses but also Protestant services that were held to commemorate those who fought in the Rising and their families (18<sup>th</sup> March, p.11), and the latter category devoted to articles about those who had either directly participated, or were eye-witnesses to the events of Easter Week in Dublin, 1916 (see *Figure 4*).

WHEN I GOT back to my own part of the building I found Volunteers who had come up for food telling the girls that the Germans had landed troops somewhere .. I tried to discourage these rumours. But they could not be killed.

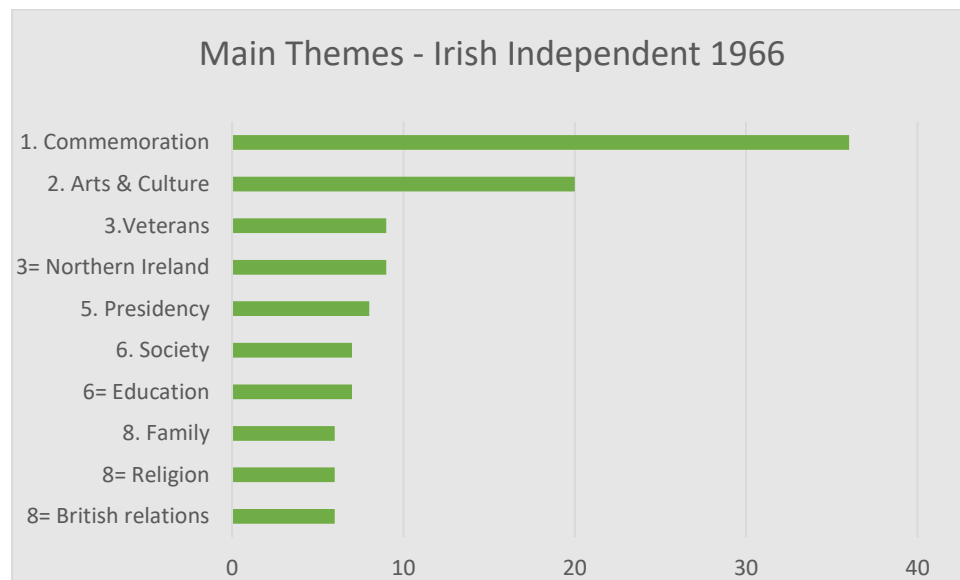
The next time I went to Mr. Pearse I told him that I objected to having those under my orders filled with false hopes by false rumours. He quite agreed with me. I said that I wanted to tell them the most hopeful thing that was known for certain. Was there anything that suggested

Figure 4: *Irish Times*, 7th April 1966, p.11

### 4.2.3 Irish Independent

140 articles from the *Irish Independent* relating to the Easter Rising were downloaded from the *Irish Newspaper Archive*. Graph 2.4 below lists (in descending order) the ten most recurring themes that the *Irish Independent* focused on.

### 2.4 Main Themes – Irish Independent 1966



The majority of articles and photographs (36) directly deal with commemorative events such as the statue of Thomas Davies being unveiled in College Green, Dublin (14<sup>th</sup> March 1966, p.11), the reopening of *Kilmainham Gaol* (11<sup>th</sup> April 1966, p.14) and local councils objecting to how the commemorations were handled (see *Figure 5*) were the most recurrent theme identified during the analysis.

'Arts & Culture' (2) was the second most frequent theme identified with stories such as a piece entitled '1916 Rising was well served by its artists' (6<sup>th</sup> April 1966, p.6). Veterans (3=) of Easter week 1916 and Northern Ireland (3=) were given the same amount of coverage, as per *Graph 2.4*. On the



Figure 5: Irish Independent, 25th March 1966, p.14



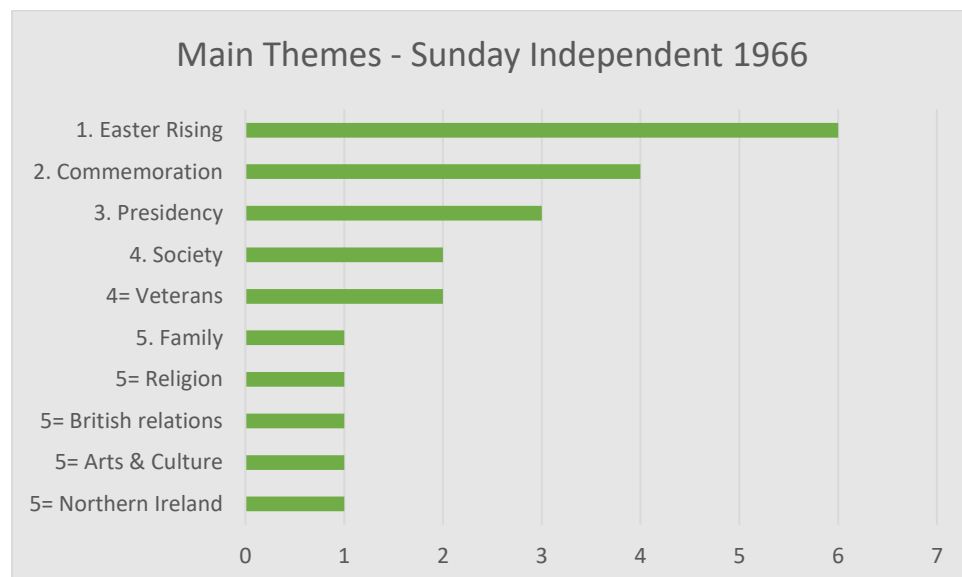
opening of the Garden of Remembrance in Dublin, the *Irish Independent* published the story entitled ‘Veterans of War of Independence see Ceremony’ (12<sup>th</sup> April 1966, p.6). Northern Ireland stories centred on the threats of 1916 parades being disrupted by unionists (16<sup>th</sup> April 1966, p.1) and ‘anti-1916 Paisleyite parade’ (14<sup>th</sup> April 1966, p.1). The debate of Irish ‘reunification’ was also mentioned in the context of stories relating to the Easter Rising and Northern Ireland (18<sup>th</sup> April 1966, p.8).

Other themes such as ‘Family’ relating to relatives of the those involved in the Easter Rising, and ‘Education’ (=6) were other themes focused upon. As a populist and market-driven newspaper (Kiberd, 1991), the *Irish Independent*’s predominant focus on the commemorative events as well stories of those who fought the 1916 rebellion that was being commemorated are unsurprising. Themes such ‘Society’ (6=) and ‘Religion’ (8) were also expected to heavily feature in a bourgeois newspaper that was the ‘organ of the Catholic bourgeoisie’ (O’Brien, 1966:11).

#### 4.2.4 Sunday Independent

Graph 2.5 illustrates the ten most focal themes (in descending order) from 40 articles and photographs downloaded from the *Irish Newspaper Archive* in eight editions of the *Sunday Independent* that were identified as having a direct link to the 1916 Easter Rising.

#### 2.5 Main themes – Sunday Independent 1966



As oppose to its daily edition, the *Sunday Independent*’s primary focus was events of Easter week 1916 (1) rather than any stories linked to its commemoration (2) as per *Graph 2.5*. ‘Connolly as prisoner’ was a piece detailing D.W. O’Toole’s – a British soldier- experience during Easter week, including a conversation with James Connolly (24<sup>th</sup> April 1966, p.3). Accounts such as this one was typical of the

stories found in the newspaper. 'Garden fit for heroes' (17<sup>th</sup> April 1966, p.9), detailing the opening of the Garden of Remembrance in Dublin, was typical of articles classified as 'Commemoration' (see Figure 6). Others included stories on commemorative events in Cork (3<sup>rd</sup> April 1966, p.2) or a plaque being unveiled in Ringsend, Dublin (1<sup>st</sup> May 1966, p.4).

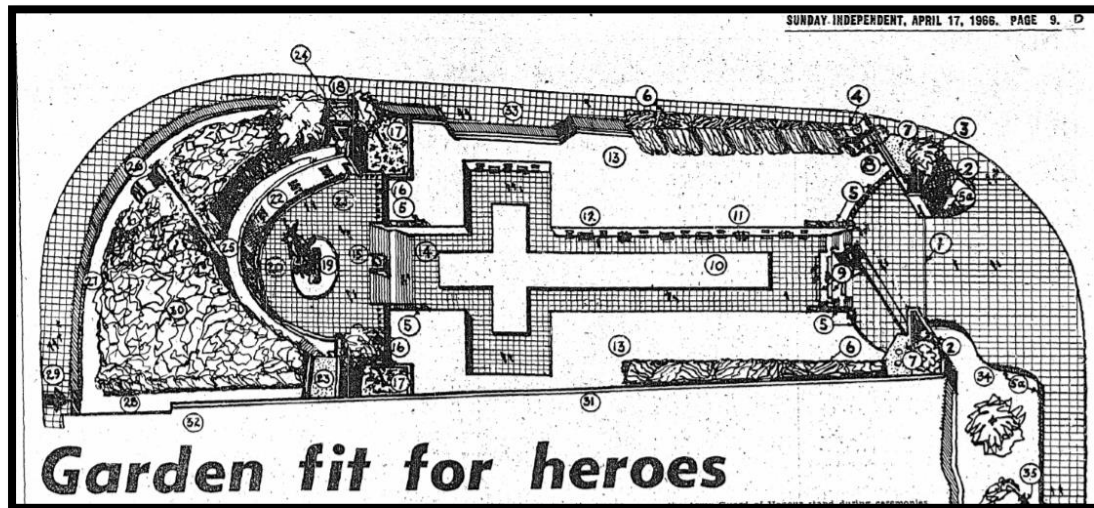


Figure 6: Sunday Independent, 17th April 1966, p.9

Third most predominant theme was once again the 'Presidency' (3). As the incumbent was, as has been stated, the most prominent veteran and the sole-surviving highest-ranking leader of the Rising by this point, it is unsurprising that Eamon de Valera was given considerable converge. However, unlike Figure 2 depicting a clear photograph in the *Irish Times* of Eamon deValera in the fore ground, the *Sunday Independent* printed a photograph of the President's silhouette, therefore, masking his advanced age (see Figure 7).

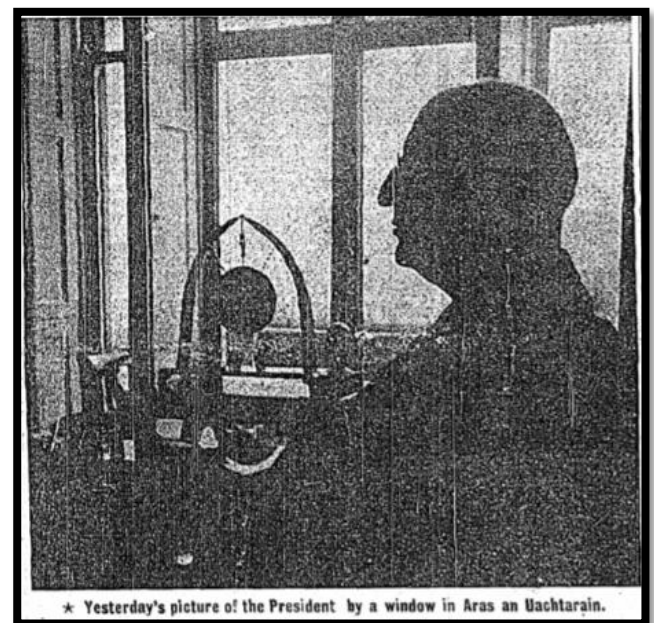


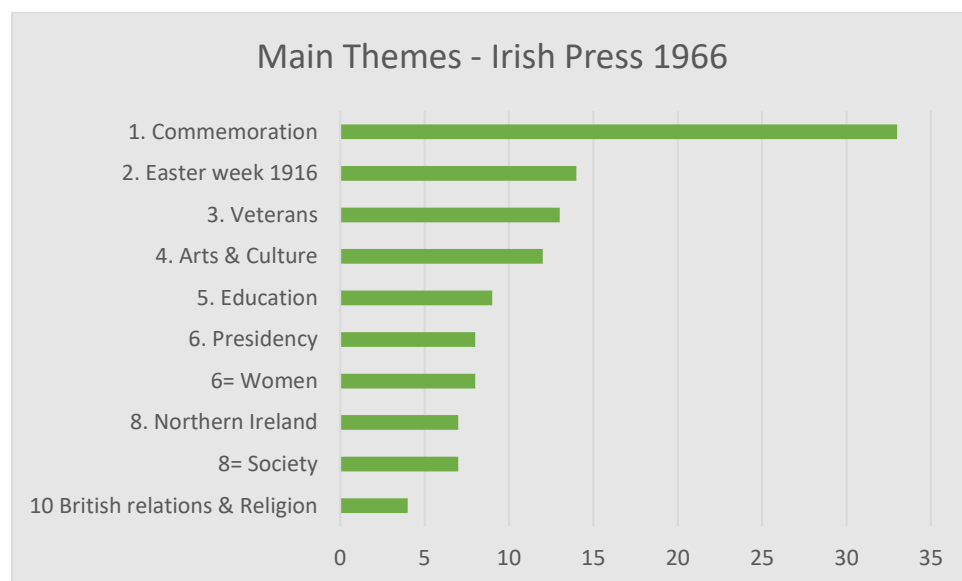
Figure 7: Sunday Independent, 10th April 1966, p.1

Other featured themes include 'Veterans' (4=) and 'Society' (4=), while 'Family', 'British relations', 'Religion', 'Arts & Culture' and 'Northern Ireland' had only one article in each category.

#### 4.2.5 Irish Press

Graph 2.6 illustrates the ten most focal themes (in descending order) from 163 articles and photographs that were collected from the *Irish Press* – once again downloaded from the *Irish Newspaper Archive*. Like the other dailies analysed from 1966, the most substantial part of the *Irish Press*'s coverage of the Easter Rising was events commemorating it with 20% of articles collected focusing on commemorative events (1), as per graph 2.6.

#### 2.6 Main themes – Irish Press 1966



All other themes identified were overall covered in equally with 'Easter Week 1916' (2), 'Veterans' (3) and 'Arts & Education' (4) featuring more prominently. As per *graph 2.1*, the *Irish Press* printed substantially more photographs than the other dailies analysed. Indeed, articles about events in 1916 were accompanied by numerous photographs such as the piece 'In the Provinces' published on 8<sup>th</sup> of April 1966 (see *Figure 8*).

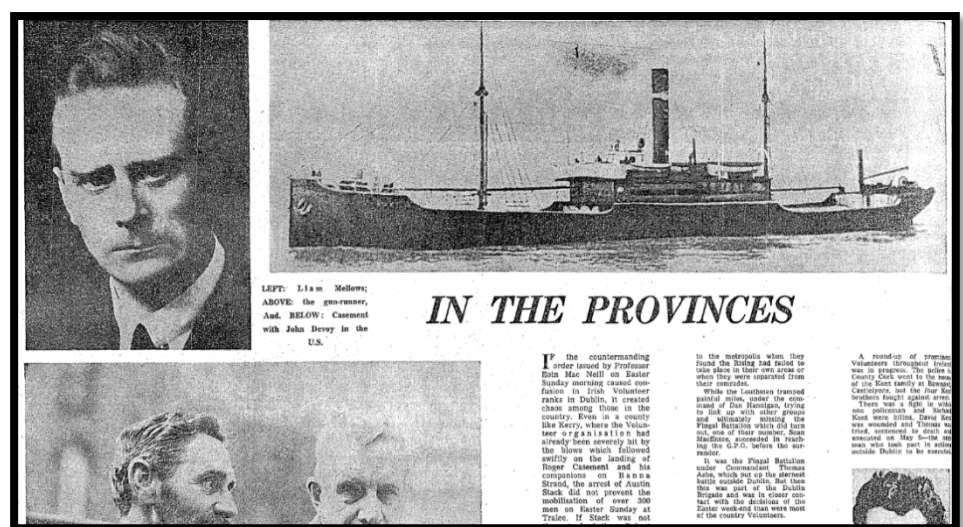


Figure 8: Irish Press, 8th April 1966, p.22

Across all newspapers analysed in 1966, 'Veterans' (3) were given the most coverage in the *Irish Press* with 13 articles devoted to those who participated in the Rising – all of which were complimentary to the insurgents.

The *Irish Press* was also the only newspaper to prominently feature women's role in the Rising (devoting a feature entitled 'Women of the Rising') as the category 'Women' (6=) only features in the themes analysed from all newspapers in 1966. Furthermore, the *Irish Press* was the only newspaper to feature photographs (as well as numerous articles) of the women fought in the Rising (see Figure 9).

The 'Presidency' (6=) was coverage as much as 'Women' and, like other dailies, detailed the various commemorative events attended by Eamon deValera.

Owing to the traditional strong links between the *Irish Press* and Eamon deValera, who was the newspaper's founder (O'Brien, 2001). Stories pertaining to Irish 'Society' and 'Northern Ireland' were given as much prominence as each other (8).

#### 4.2.6 Conclusion -1966

In conclusion, the *Irish Times* devoted the most coverage to the Easter Rising during the aforementioned timeline with a tone that tended to be negative towards the Rising and its commemorations. This tone is most probably attributed to the newspaper's background and ideology that was targeted at urban centres and Southern Unionists (Dudley Edwards, 1968). The *Irish Press's* coverage was, however, overwhelmingly positive which may be attributable to its links to Eamon deValera and his Fianna Fail party (O'Brien, M., 2001). The *Irish Independent*, unlike its *Sunday* edition, was mostly positive. The editor of the *Irish Press* at this time was Time Pat Coogan who stated that there was a concerted effort to modernise the *Irish Press* and make it, like its rivals, a more populist newspaper (Coogan, 2008). On balance, the *Irish Press* did focus on the same principal themes (in relation to the Easter Rising) as the *Irish Independent* and the *Irish Times*. Therefore, Coogan's effort to modernise are evident in this case.



Figure 9: *Irish Press*, 23rd March, p.14



All newspapers, except for the *Sunday Independent*, had as their main theme the commemoration of the 1916 Easter Rising. Given the timeline was chosen due to this commemorative period, this is to be expected. The difference of focus between newspapers is revealed when analysing subsequent themes. The *Irish Times*'s other main focal themes were events during the Rising, arts and culture, societal issues and Northern Ireland. In term of the themes that were recurring, The *Irish Press*'s editorial was similar to that of the *Irish Times*'s with the exception that the *Press*'s focused on the veterans of the Rising a lot more. The *Irish Independent*, as well as its *Sunday* edition, also devoted considerable column inches to the veterans of 1916. All newspapers, at slight variable degrees, focused on the oldest surviving leader of the Rising who was President in 1966 – Eamon de Valera. Photographs of the President tended to show him at events – except, interestingly, during the Easter Sunday parade down O'Connell Street in Dublin.

### **4.3 Findings 2016**

#### **4.3.1 Introduction**

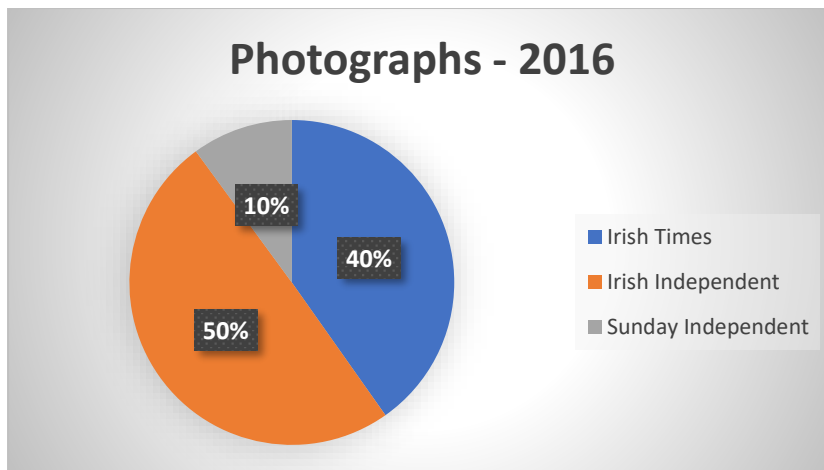
The following findings are from the four aforementioned newspapers selected, for the period of 27<sup>th</sup> February 2016 to 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016. The results presented will deal with an overview of the results, i.e. number of articles and photographs, the overall tone adopted before analysing the editorial decisions of each newspaper (and the identified themes) in details. As with section 4.2 above, the numbers in parenthesis next to the most recurring themes mark their place in the standings.

There were a total of 581 articles and photographs that were analysed. The *Irish Times* devoted the most coverage to the commemorations with 271, followed by the *Irish Independent* (251) and the *Sunday Independent* (59).

As per section 4.2, The latter newspaper's position should not be scrutinised too much as it is the only Sunday newspaper that was analysed.

The number of photographs analysed was 180. Nearly half of these photographs (89) were found in the *Irish Independent* – the most amount. This was followed by the *Irish Times* (73) and the *Sunday Independent* (18). The following graph (3.1) demonstrates these results in percentage points.

### 3.1 Photographs - 2016



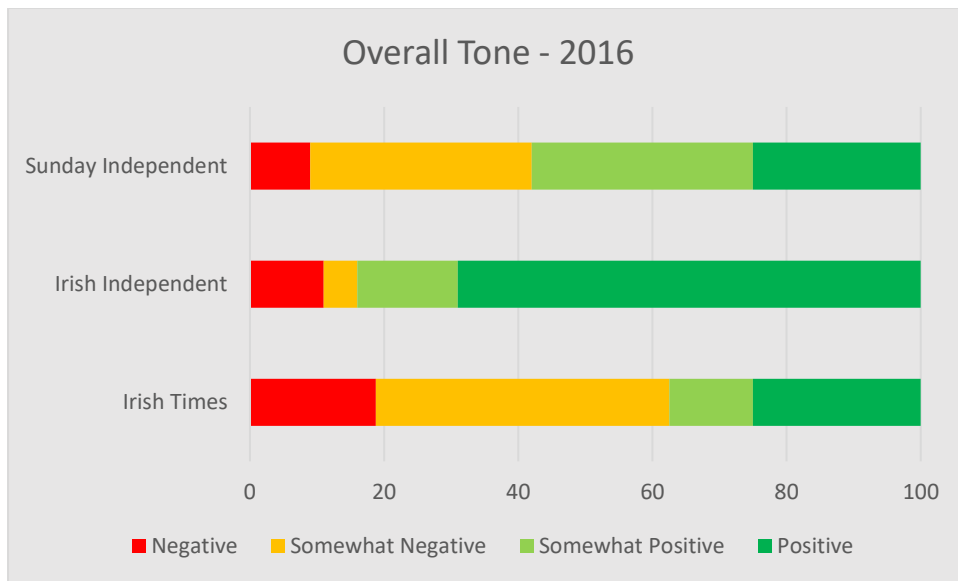
The overall tone of each article was determined by the content analyst's interpretive skills as per Creswell (2003) and Berg (2009). Elements, such as the vocabulary and the content of photographs as well as the general tone of the article, determined into which of four categories along a spectrum each article would be compartmentalised. These four categories on this spectrum were the same ones used for the analysis of newspapers' tone in 1966 and are as follows: 'Negative', 'Somewhat Negative', 'Somewhat Positive' and 'Positive'. The criteria for determining into which category each article was filed was the same used as in 1966 (see *Findings 1966*).

For the purposes of clarity, as with the analysis of newspapers from 1966, all articles that were considered as 'straight' (i.e. the Easter Rising was mentioned without any discernible positive or negative tones) were discounted from this part of the analysis.

For the centenary, the *Irish Times*'s coverage mostly leaned towards 'Somewhat Negative' (43.75%) as opposed to 'Somewhat Positive' (12.5%), clearly showing that in 2016, the newspaper was still somewhat hostile to the Rising. However, probably due to its reputation as being fair and balanced, it is observable that outright 'Negative' (18.75%) and 'Positive' (25%) comments were given similar amount of coverage, with a slight propensity toward the positive.

The *Irish Independent*'s coverage was overwhelmingly 'Positive' (69%), leaving little in the way of nuanced and balanced commentary – neither 'Somewhat Positive' (15%), nor 'Somewhat Negative' (5%). 11% of the newspapers samples were interpreted as firmly 'Negative'.

### 3.2 Overall tone - 2016



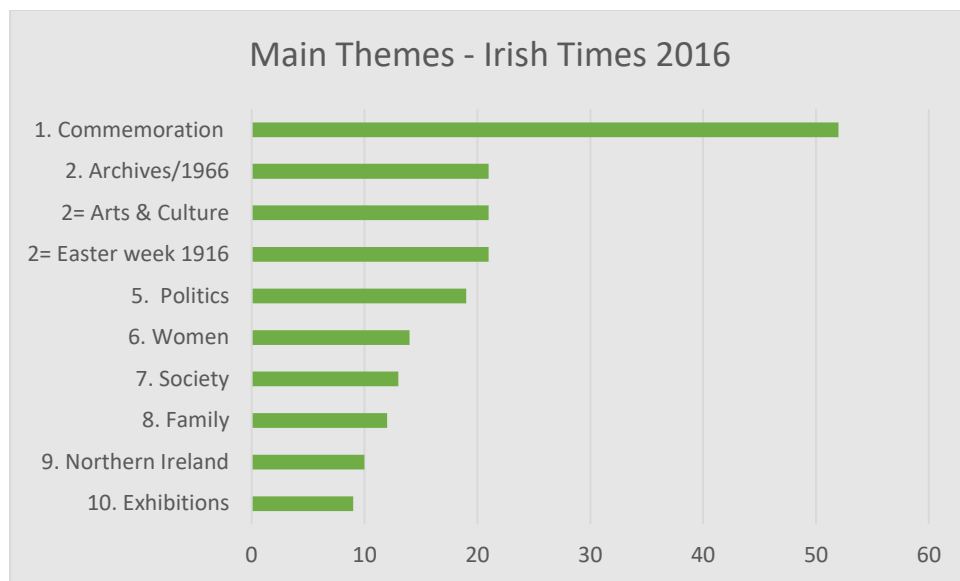
Finally, there was more observable nuance and balance in the editorial tone if the *Sunday Independent*, however. Both 'Somewhat Positive' and 'Somewhat Negative' categories were given the same coverage – 33%. There was, however, a clear difference in the two remaining categories; 25% were 'Positive' and 9% were 'Negative'. Therefore, liked its daily edition, the Sunday Independent tended to favour positive stories relation to the Easter Rising.

#### 4.3.2 Irish Times

Graph 3.2 illustrates the ten most focal themes (in descending order) that the *Irish Times* focused on between 27<sup>th</sup> February and 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016. Graph 3.3 below lists in descending order the ten most recurring themes that the *Irish Times* focused on

The *Irish Time's* main focus was unsurprisingly the commemoration (1) of the Easter Rising; 52 of the 271 articles analysed had this as their main theme.

### 3.3 Main themes – Irish Times 2016



As well as 'Arts & Culture', 'Archives/1966' and 'Easter week 1916' (=2) were the joint second most covered themes during this period. The former focusing on exhibits, art pieces and books focusing on the Easter Rising. The latter focused on how the Rising was reported on in 1916 and how the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary was commemorated by the *Irish Times*. This was done through a feature entitled 'A miscellany' (see Figure 10).



Figure 10: *Irish Times*, 17th March 2016, p.4

The next focal theme identified by the content analyst was that of 'Politics' (5). Although the 2016 general election had taken place on 26<sup>th</sup> February, it would take until 29<sup>th</sup> April before a government was formed. This would explain why political stories were omnipresent during this period (see Figure 11).

Stories about women were the next main theme (6) with pieces about the nurses that tended the wounded during



Figure 11: *Irish Times*, 16th March, p.3

Easter week, 1916 (29<sup>th</sup> March, p.34), the debate on abortion and features on the Constance Markievicz.

Articles about 'Society' (7) during this time predominately focused on issues of the day that included trade union strikes (16<sup>th</sup> April 2016, p.14) and homelessness (15<sup>th</sup> March 2016, p.5) amongst others.



Figure 12: Irish Times, 12th March 2016, p.7

'Family' (8) referred to articles about the 1916 insurgents' descendants, such as 'Glorious Days: my grandfather's Rising' (25<sup>th</sup> March 2016, p.12). 'Northern Ireland' (9) articles principally dealt with the uneasy atmosphere leading up to Easter weekend in Northern Ireland, with fears of a renewal in dissident republican activity to mark the centenary. concerned the preparations for the commemorative Easter weekend and how they were anticipated north of the Border (see Figure 12).

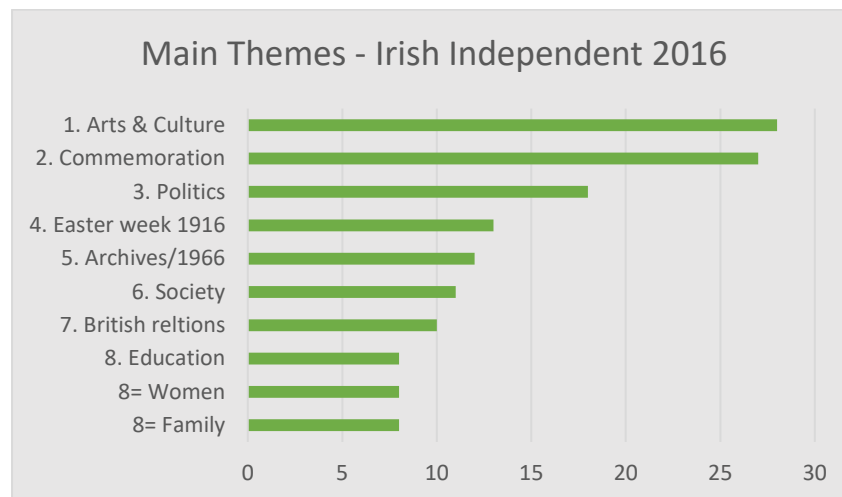
Finally, the last remaining of the main themes was that of 'Exhibitions' (10), referring to articles which focused on exhibits as well as visitor attractions showcasing memorabilia relating to Easter week (and

that period in general) 1916, such as 'Hand-painted Republic flag is prime piece in Rising exhibition' (15<sup>th</sup> March 2016, p.4).

### 4.3.3 Irish Independent

Graph 3.4 illustrates the ten most focal themes (in descending order) from 251 articles downloaded from the *Irish Newspaper Archive* that the *Irish Independent* focused on between 27<sup>th</sup> February and 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

### 3.4 Main themes – Irish Independent 2016



Unlike its competitor the *Irish Times*, the main theme that was the focus of the *Irish Independent*'s coverage was not that of 'Commemoration' (2) but of 'Arts & Culture' 1– but only marginally, as per graph 3.4. The *Irish Independent* had pieces emphasising the role that the arts played at the time of the Rising such as 'Shakespearean Rising: Pearse's love of the Bard' (23<sup>rd</sup> April 2016, p.23), and the role the arts was playing in commemorating the Rising in 2016 (see *Figure 13*).



Figure 13: *Irish Independent*, 11th March 2016, p.23

Due to the commemorative timeline for this study coinciding with the aftermath of the general election 2016, it is to be expected that 'Politics' (3) would be a recurring theme in the context of the study. Many articles brought up the Easter Rising when discussing



Figure 14: *Irish Independent*, 26th March, p.5

the elections such as the piece entitled 'Grand coalition would

honour spirit of 1916' (29<sup>th</sup> February 2016, p.7) While all political parties were mentioned in these articles (especially Fine Gael and Fianna Fail), it was *Sinn Fein* that was the party that was singled out for heavy criticism in three articles, such as 'Sinn Fein try to rewrite history by linking Rising to Provisionals' (18<sup>th</sup> April 2016, p.6).

'Easter week 1916' (4) had articles such on topics such as the ambush at Ashbourne (27<sup>th</sup> February 2016, p. 61), a feature on James Connolly (26<sup>th</sup> May 2016, p.16) and a football match that occurred in Frongoch internment camp in 1916 (see *Figure 14*), amongst others.

Similarly to the *Irish Times*, the *Irish Independent* also published articles from its archives (6) about its initial covering of the aftermath of the Rising in 1916 but did not reprint articles of the 1966 jubilee commemorations.

The newspaper also focused on British relations (7), mentioning the upcoming EU referendum (28<sup>th</sup> March, p.47) as well as President Michael D. Higgins call for Great Britain to re-examine its 'imperial past' (29<sup>th</sup> March, p.2).

Finally, 'Education', 'Women' and 'Family' (8=) were given the same amount of coverage with eight articles in each category focusing, respectively, on national schools reimagining the Proclamation (15<sup>th</sup> March, p.12), the opening of an exhibition on the women of the Rising (14<sup>th</sup> April, p.2) and descendants remembering family members who fought in the rebellion (see *Figure 15*).



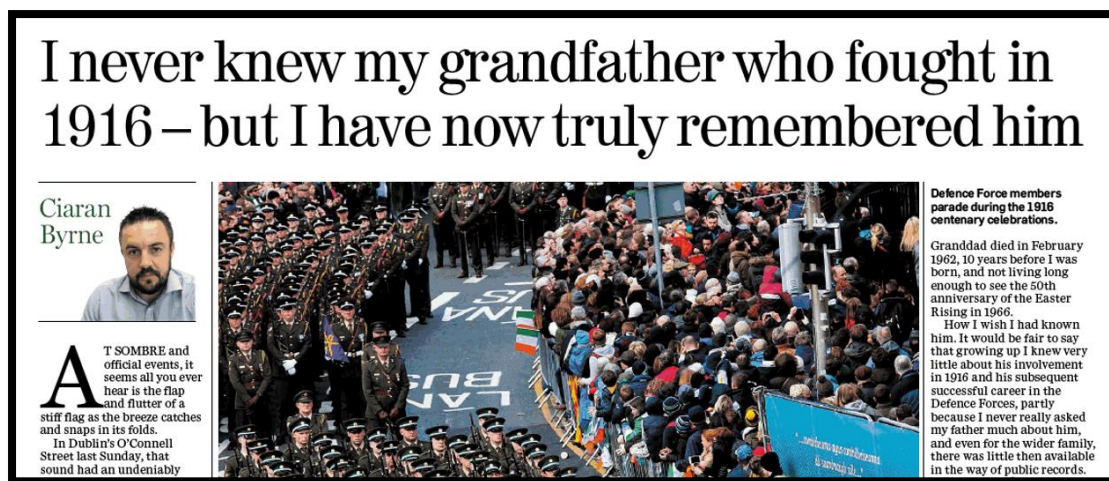
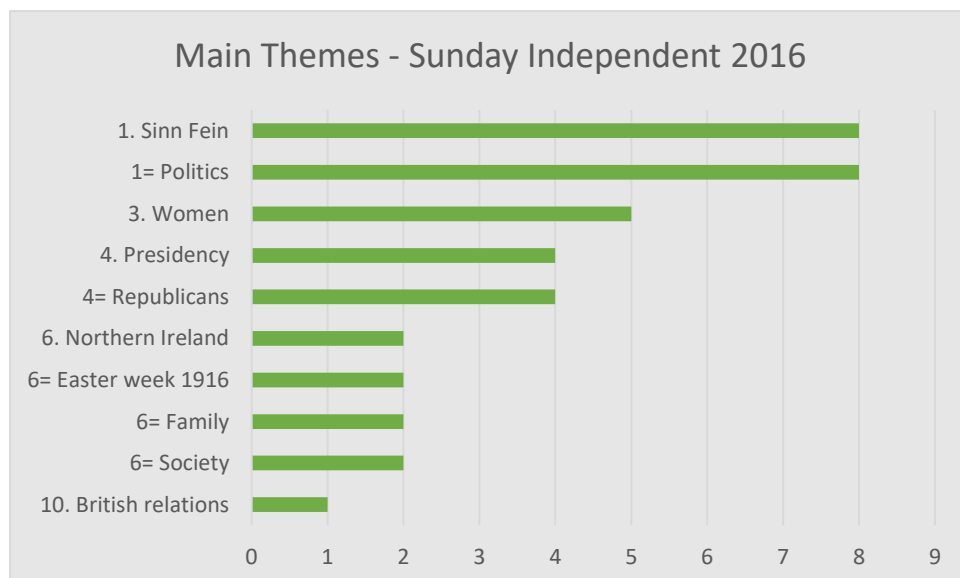


Figure 15: Irish Independent, 2nd April 2016, p.1

#### 4.3.4 Sunday Independent

59 articles were identified as relating to the Rising in the *Sunday Independent*. Graph 3.5 illustrates the ten most popular themes (in descending order) between 27<sup>th</sup> February and 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

#### 3.5 Main themes – Sunday Independent 2016



Both 'Sinn Fein' (1=) and 'Politics' (1=) were the main themes that the *Sunday Independent* focused on in relation to the Rising. Although it can be argued that these two categories are similar, stories in the 'Politics' category were considered to be about general political matters such as 'Don't blame the housing crisis on the Constitution' (3<sup>rd</sup> April 2016 p.15), whereas articles in the 'Sinn Fein' category focused heavily, and often solely, on *Sinn Fein* (see Figure 16). It was observed that *Sinn Fein* was



mentioned in exclusively derogatory terms by the *Sunday Independent*. The party was mentioned as either an obstacle to forming a stable government (see *Figure 16*) or as the party of ‘dissident republicans’ such as the article entitled ‘Gardai fear trouble as Sinn Fein and dissidents plan Dublin rallies’ (17<sup>th</sup> April 2016 p.10).



Figure 16: *Sunday Independent*, 24th April, p.42

‘Women’ (3) featured stories on Constance Markievicz (20<sup>th</sup> March 2016, p.27) as well a woman’s conference at the Countess’ home in Lissadell, Co Sligo to commemorating women’s role in the Rising (17<sup>th</sup> April, p.2). ‘Presidency’ (4=) featured ‘Higgins: We have not achieved the dreams of the Rising leaders’ (27<sup>th</sup> March 2016, p.3)



Figure 17: *Sunday Independent*, 20th March 2016, p.6

and ‘Michael D. doesn’t speak for us, as he should, but speaks for himself’ (3<sup>rd</sup> April 2016, p.25).

Articles categorised in ‘Republicans’ (=4) dealt with commemorative events and fears of resurgent activities of so-called ‘dissident republicans’ in the run up to the centenary (see *Figure 17*), especially in ‘Northern Ireland’ (=6).

Remaining themes covered included ‘Easter week 1916’ (=8) which profiled Constance Markievicz; ‘Just who was Constance, the misunderstood countess?’ (20<sup>th</sup> March 2016, p.27), ‘Family’ (=8): ‘The lethal legacy of my brave 1916 grandfather’ (27<sup>th</sup> March, p.23), and ‘Society’ (=8) which the St Patrick’s Day celebrations were mentioned in the context of the commemorative period (13<sup>th</sup> March 2016, p.8)

#### **4.3.5 Conclusion – 2016**

Overall, all three newspapers covered the centennial commemorations in a clear positive way – with the ever-populist newspaper, the *Irish Independent* being the most favourable. Their editorial enthusiasm for everything 1916 was tempered by the more nuanced coverage found in its *Sunday* edition. The *Irish Times*'s coverage tended to air on the negative side- but not overtly so.

The *Irish Independent* featured more photographs than the *Irish Times* during the eight weeks period sampled – but not by much.

Furthermore, the *Irish Times* and the *Irish Independent* both partly re-published articles from their archives. The *Irish Times* republished articles from May 1916 (in the aftermath of the rebellion) and articles from Easter 1966. The *Irish Independent*, however, solely published articles from The *Evening Herald* after the Rising and from its own paper on the 24<sup>th</sup> April 1916 – the first day of the rebellion.

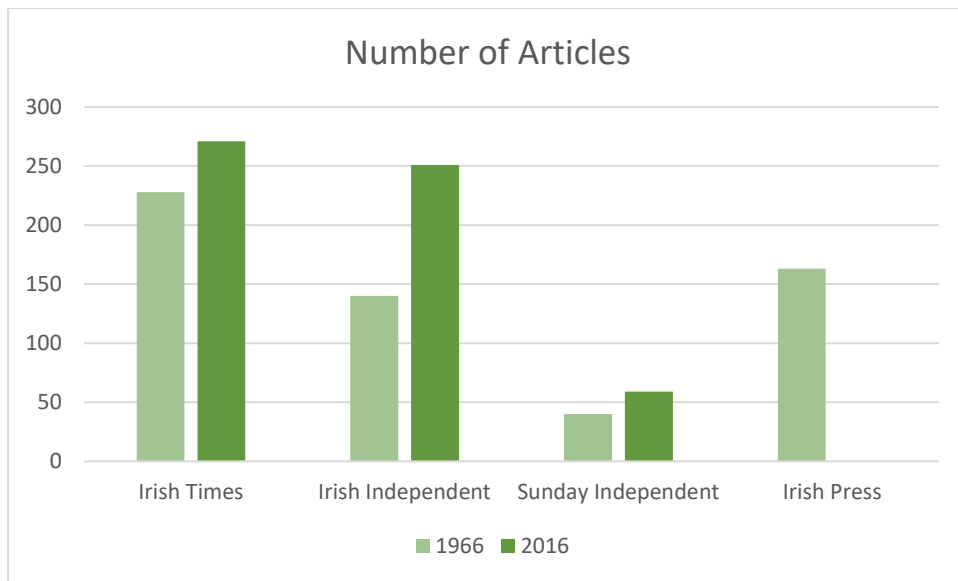
Another noticeable thread throughout the sampled newspapers was that of stories about women's involvement during Easter week, 1916. Each one of the *Irish Times*, the *Irish Independent* and the *Sunday Independent* focused on women's role in the Rising in 2016 so much so that the category of 'Women' featured in the ten most recurrent themes (out of twenty-six).

#### **4.4 Comparative analysis – 1966 and 2016**

So far, this chapter has presented the results of the four newspapers that comprised the content analysis. The results of each of these years were independently analysed from one another. This section (4.4) will amalgamate these results in order to contrast both periods and to potentially find an evolution in the way the Irish print press has viewed the Easter Rising fifty years on. The Irish Press will not feature in this section as it was not part of the 2016 analysis.

Firstly, when considering the amount of coverage dedicated to the Easter Rising at two significant moments of remembrance, it is clear when viewing graph 4.1 below, that more column inches were devoted to the Rising in 2016 than in 1966 across all three newspapers, although the degrees of the increases varied from one newspaper to the other.

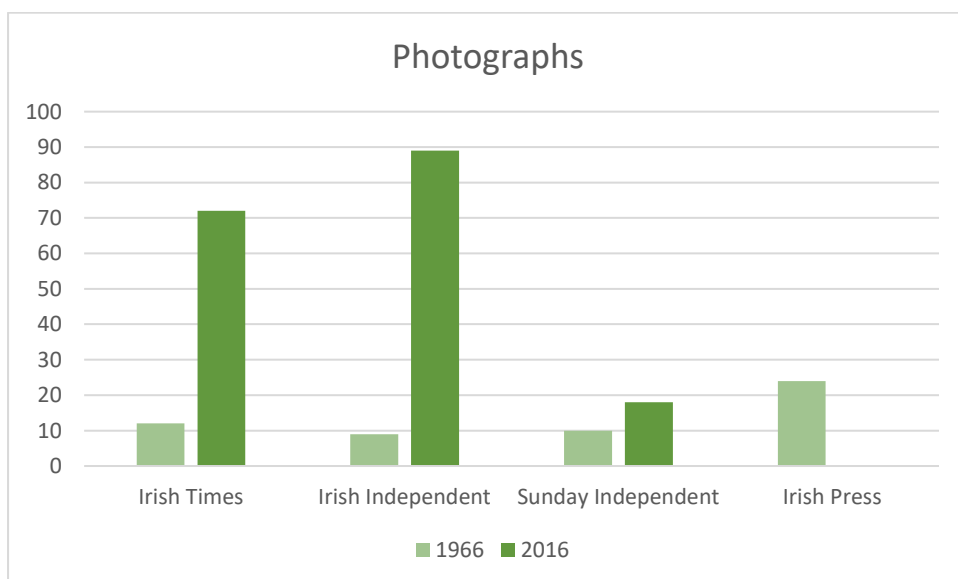
#### 4.1 Number of articles 1966 v 2016



Whereas, there was a marginal increase in coverage between 1966 and 2016 in the *Irish Times* – from 228 articles in 1966, to 271 articles in 2016 - and the *Sunday Independent* – from 40 articles in 1966 to 59 in 2016, there was, however, a marked increase in coverage in the *Irish Independent* between both periods (from 140 articles in 1966 to 251 in 2016).

When viewing *Graph 4.2*, the most noticeable trend across the three newspapers is significant increase in usage of photographs from 1966 to 2016. There was a slight increase observed iOn the *Sunday Independent*; 10 photographs in 1966 and 18 in 2016.

#### 4.2 Photographs 1966 v 2016



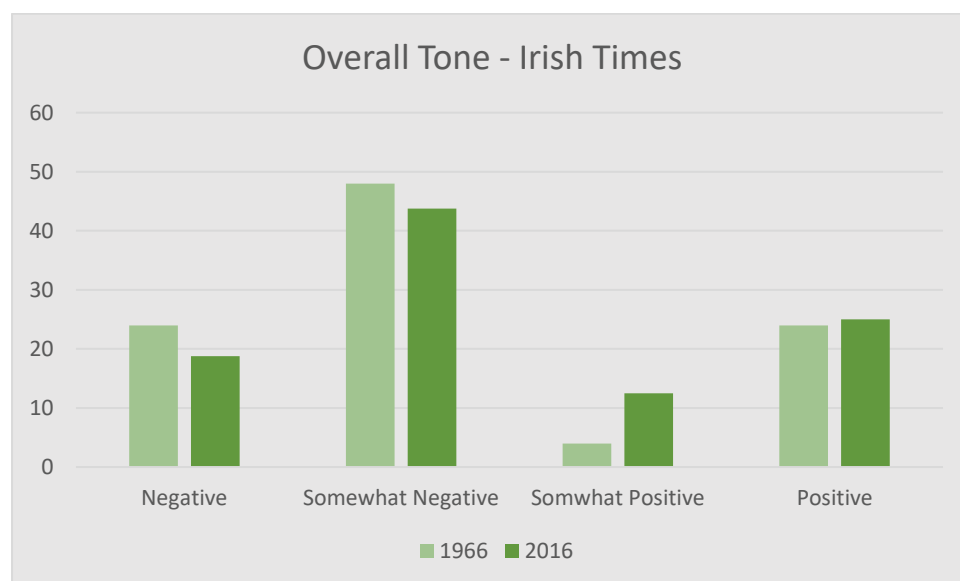
However, the increase in usage was significantly higher when considering the two daily newspapers. Over eight weeks, the *Irish Times* carried 12 photographs relating to the Rising in 1966 but 73 in 2016. The most drastic increase was to be found, however, in *the Irish Independent*: whereas only 9 photographs were printed in 1966, it carried the highest number of photographs in 2016 – 89.

Another marked difference between the main themes covered, was the emergence of the category of ‘Women’ in 2016. Although there were articles about women in every newspaper analysed in 1966, they were not numerous enough in order to be considered. However, in 2016, every newspaper sampled during the eight-week timeline had enough articles about either women in Irish society in 2016 or women’s stories in 1916 - during the Easter Rising, enough so the Category ‘Women’ features in the ten most recurrent themes in relation to the research parameters. ‘Women’ was 8<sup>th</sup> in *Irish Independent*, 6<sup>th</sup> in *Irish Times* and 3<sup>rd</sup> in *Sunday Independent*. The *Irish Press* was the only newspaper in 1966 that featured enough stories about women so that the category ‘Women’ was joint sixth most popular (along with ‘Presidency’) as seen in graph 2.4.

#### 4.4.1 Irish Times

When observing the evolution in the overall tone the *Irish Times* adopted towards the Rising in 1966 and in 2016 (Graph 5.1), it can be noticed that the newspaper has, overall, remained consistent in its views towards the 1916 Rising. In terms of tone, the ‘Somewhat Negative’ category remained the most predominant one during the centenary - as it had been during the jubilee. However, the *Irish Times* was less critical of the Rising in 2016 as it had been in 1966.

#### 4.3 Overall tone – Irish Times



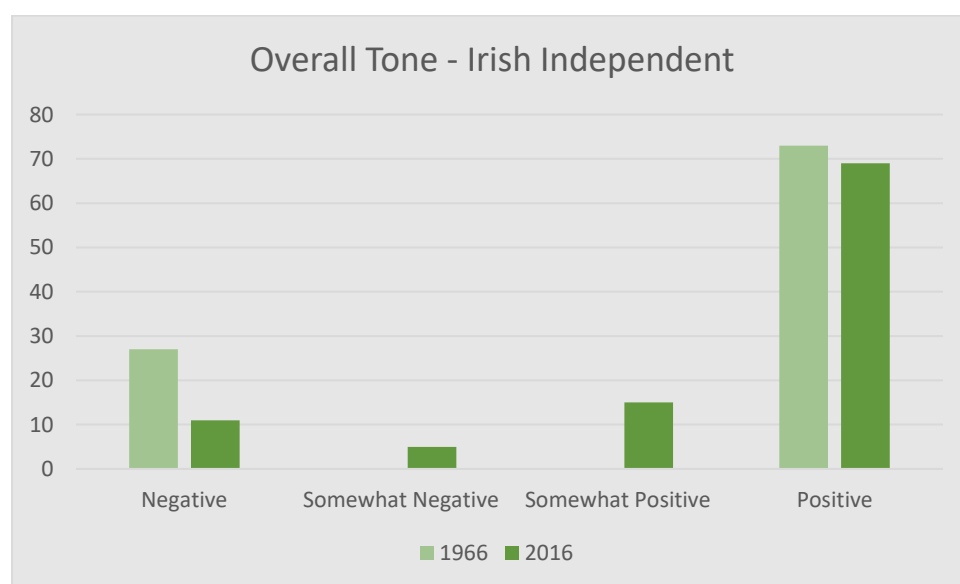
Articles interpreted as ‘Negative’ and ‘Somewhat Negative’ slightly numbered less in 2016 (as per *Graph 5.1*). Articles deemed ‘Positive’ rose in number – but negligibly (from 24% to 25 %). The category with the most significant change was ‘Somewhat Positive’ (4% in 1966 and 12.5% in 2016) Overall, the *Irish Times* has consistently remained somewhat critical of the Easter Rising and its legacy, although somewhat less in 2016 than in 1966.

#### 4.4.2 Irish Independent

The overtly favourable tone the *Irish Independent* adopted towards the Rising during the jubilee in 1966 remained in 2016. 73% of the sampled articles in 1966 and 69% in 2016 were ‘Positive’, as per *Graph 5.2* – a negligibly downward shift. The number of articles interpreted as ‘Negative’ also decreased between 1966 and 2016. This shift, however, was slightly more pronounced (27% in 1966; 11% in 2016).

Whereas the tone in the newspaper’s articles were binary in 1966 (either ‘Negative’ or ‘Positive’), there was, in 2016, noticeably more nuance in the tone the *Irish Independent* adopted as both ‘Somewhat Negative’ and ‘Somewhat Positive’ categories appear in the 2016 analysis – the latter being more significant.

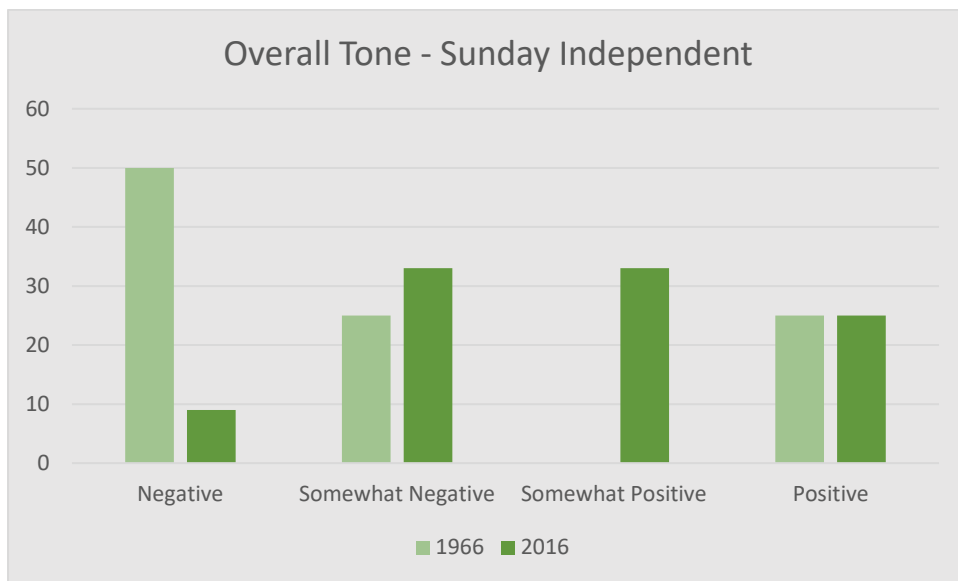
#### 4.4 Overall tone – Irish Independent



#### 4.4.3 Sunday Independent

The *Sunday Independent*'s overall tone in 1966 tended to be 'Negative' as well as 'Somewhat Negative', as per Graph 5.3. However, in 2016, it can be observed that overall tone was more nuanced. Unlike in 1966, all four categories that illustrate the overall tone are represented and are balanced: 'Somewhat Negative' (9%), both 'Somewhat' categories (33%) and 'Positive' (25). This somewhat equal dispersion across all four categories in Graph 4.5 illustrate an attempt at balance. This same attempt could be seen in the daily version as per Graph 4.4 – but to a lesser extent.

#### 4.5 Overall tone – Sunday Independent



## 5. Conclusion

This study has shown that there are indeed differences in editorial decisions taken by Irish newspapers when covering the subject of the 1916 Easter Rising. This is reflected in each newspaper's tone towards the Rising, which somewhat evolved between 1966 and 2016.

The *Irish Independent*, while at first was hostile towards the leaders that staged the rebellion in 1916, has been found to be consistently following public opinion by highlighting the positive aspect and legacy of the Rising itself. This favourable view was particularly marked during the 50<sup>th</sup> and 100<sup>th</sup> anniversaries in 1966 and 2016 respectively. The *Sunday Independent* has somewhat strayed from its daily version and has served as the more critical voice, especially in 1966.

These findings can be better understood when analysing the newspaper's shift in tone in the years following the Rising when it 'moved closer' to *Sinn Féin*, therefore moving away from its traditional links with the *Irish Parliamentary Party* (O'Brien, 2001:3). This move 'had seemed unlikely' (Kenneally, 2008:101) as the newspaper was moving away from the political party that had advocated 'Home Rule' and was now moving closer to a party advocating full independence from Britain. This 'U-turn' demonstrated the newspaper's readiness and willingness to reflect public opinion, regardless of its own previous position. In other words, it had shown itself to be a populist newspaper that was purely 'market-driven' (Kiberd, 1991). The Irish public had become sympathetic towards the rebellion's leaders and their ideals, and as a result, the *Irish Independent* reflected this change.

The *Irish Times*, on the other hand, has never viewed the Rising positively since the event itself in 1916. It has been a consistent critical voice on the matter continually questioning the legitimacy of the event itself as well as how it has been commemorated through the years. Although as time has gone by, it has been somewhat less critical. This is understood when examining the newspaper's reaction to the rebellion in the aftermath.

In 1916, The *Irish Times* did not follow the tide of public opinion. Although McGarry (2012:40) identified a 'hint of ambivalence' in how the *Irish Times* reported on the Rising in 1916 by, for instance, commending aspects of the Rising such as 'the fact that the rebels had paid for some goods commandeered from local businesses'. The *Irish Times* would very quickly abandon any equivocating tone. Within days, headlines such as 'The Butchery of Civilians' and 'Callous Rebels' would appear ending any favourable view the newspaper might have held of those who carried out the rebellion. As the findings show, the newspaper has not strayed much from this hostile 'position'. The *Irish Times* certainly did not follow the *Irish Independent* or the *Irish Press* in showcasing 'the achievements of the

independent state' (Higgins, 2007:33). This is exemplified in the negative tone it adopted throughout both commemorative periods, refusing to partake in the 'cult of martyrs' as Owen Dudley Edwards put it – describing Patrick Pearse in 1966 as 'humourless' and emphasising that he was 'disliked'.

Indeed, as Higgins (2007:33) observed, 'the journalistic endorsements were certainly not overwhelming'. The content analysis revealed that the tone adopted by the *Sunday Independent* in the eight weeks covered in 1966 was mostly negative. As aforementioned, however, the sample was relatively low (40), therefore this could be refuted through further extensive research. However, fifty years later its critical tone, while abating, remained although, once again, the sample was relatively low (59 articles and photographs). It was found through the content analysis that in both 1966 and in 2016 it was left to the Sunday edition of the *Irish Independent* to publish.

In 1966, The *Irish Press* was overtly positive towards those who fought in the Rising and those organising the commemorative events in 1966, which were Fianna Fail, a party that was strongly linked to the newspaper at the times.

This 'position' is explained by the newspaper's roots. Founded in 1931 by Fianna Fail's Eamon deValera a year before he became Taoiseach. From then onwards, both paper and party were controlled by deValera. Thus, 'the support of the *Irish Press* was unwavering as successive deValera governments pursued policies of social conservatism, protectionism, self-sufficiency and neutrality' (O'Brien, 2001). The 1966 jubilee commemorations of the Easter Rising were an 'opportunity to celebrate the legitimacy of the state and to assert the good character of its citizens' (Higgins, 2007:34). The *Irish Independent* and, especially the *Irish Press*, were indeed in a celebratory mood as is evident from the overall tone observed. Their coverage leading up to, and following Easter Sunday, 1966 was positive with the *Irish Press* being exclusively positive.

When comparing the two anniversaries, there were discernible changes from the fiftieth anniversary to the hundredth in terms of volumes of the coverage and the number of photographs accompanying each article (both increasing significantly in 2016). This could be as a result of the Easter Rising being 'commodified' since the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2006, according to Higgins (2016)

Both the *Irish Press* and *Irish Independent* dedicated significant coverage to the veterans of 1916. When analysing 'news values', Galtung and Ruge (1965:68) observed state that 'the more an 'event can be seen in personal terms, as due to the action of specific individuals, the more probable that it will become a news item.' Therefore, it is unsurprising that those who fought in the 1916 Rising were given prominent coverage in the Irish print press. The *Irish Press* was the only newspaper that



highlighted women's involvement in the Rising in any significant way. Interestingly, while the *Irish Times* did dedicate some coverage to the veterans in 1966, it did not do so as extensively as the other newspapers in this study. In 2016, however, it was the veterans' families who were the people that were focused on in the Irish print press – but not as extensively as the veterans had been covered in 1966. This would be due to the fact that although through a relative, they would have some link to the Rising itself, this link would not be deemed as 'newsworthy' as stories about those who had actually been present in 1916. The 1966 jubilee commemorations of the Easter Rising were an 'opportunity to celebrate the legitimacy of the state and to assert the good character of its citizens' (Higgins, 2007:34).

When discussing Northern Ireland, the *Irish Times* and the *Irish Independent* touched upon the tensions that were brewing north of the Border in 1966, but it was observed that neither newspaper (along with the *Sunday Independent* and the *Irish Press*) devoted substantial column inches to the issue. These tensions existed in a 'pre-Troubles' Northern Ireland and, therefore, this could explain the seemingly blasé attitude the Irish print Press adopted towards the state of Northern Ireland at this time. During the centennial commemorations, the subject of Northern Ireland was observed to be covered as much as in 1966. This is perhaps due to the fact that the centenary occurred in a 'post-Troubles' and post Belfast Agreement era.

Another result of the Belfast Agreement was the shift in attitudes towards the Easter Rising to a 'more approving (or less critical) direction.' (McGarry, 2012:43). Indeed, when comparing the tone adopted by the *Irish Times* in 1966 and 2016, one can observe that the newspaper did indeed adopt a 'less critical' position in relation to the Rising. The same trend was observed with the *Sunday Independent* when comparing its tone in 1966 with that in 2016. However, when covering stories from Northern Ireland in 2016, it was in the context of anticipating violence – as in 1966.

Another marked difference between the newspaper coverage in 1966 and that of 2016 is the prominence given to the President. Eamon deValera was mentioned a lot more in 1966 than Michael D. Higgins in 2016. This is no doubt due to the fact that the former participated in the Easter Rising itself. It could also be argued that as a result of the inclusion of the *Irish Press* (which was founded by deValera) in this study, it would be expected that the newspaper would focus on its founder.

Although the *Irish Independent* had moved closer to *Sinn Féin* in the wake of the Rising, by 2016, it (along with its Sunday edition) would be seen as openly hostile towards the party. In 2016, *Sinn Féin* was observed as the main focus of the *Sunday Independent* and its tone was very negative as demonstrated by the article written by Ruth Dudley Edwards 'Adams will put cult before country'. This hostility would be probably due to the fact that the 'Troubles' had occurred and therefore, any

association with *Sinn Féin* – a party linked to the Provisional IRA - would not be desirable for a populist newspaper.

In 2016, both the *Irish Independent* and the *Irish Times* republished articles from their archives that dated from April and May 1916. It was observed, however, that the *Irish Independent* did not republish the articles it had written in the wake of the rebellion, opting to republish copies of *The Evening Herald*. This indicates that it perhaps did not want to remind its readers of the newspapers' original vitriolic position towards the Rising. The *Irish Times* on the other hand seemed to have no issues in republishing what it had thought a hundred years previous.

A notable observation across all newspapers analysed from both 1966 and 2016 is that cultural events such as sporting events (especially involving the Gaelic Athletic Association) were the main ways in which the Easter Rising was commemorated, which explains why such events attracted widespread coverage in the print media in both 1966 and 2016.

'History has' as Owen Dudley Edwards remarked 'for long been in Ireland a dialogue in which the present had been reduced to making simple affirmative statements, in support of the past's assertions.' While the Irish print media has made affirmative statement on the Easter Rising over the last century, these have been complex and evolving ones.

As he walked towards the Stonebreakers' yard on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1916 (while apparently whistling), Patrick Henry Pearse was confident that he would be 'remembered in posterity' and 'blessed by unborn generations; while the former is certainly true, the latter remains subject on continuing debate.

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